YET THERE IS ROOM   
NO. 3221

A SERMON   
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
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**And yet there is room.   
Luke 14:22.**   
I REMINDED YOU, this morning, [See Sermon #485, Volume 8NO ROOM FOR CHRIST IN THE INNRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] that there was no room for Christ and His parents in the inn at Bethlehemand also that there were then other places where, although there was no room for Christ, far inferior persons found a welcome and entertainment. I need, this evening, to convince you that although there are still many sinners who seem to have no room for Christ in their hearts and lives, yet there is plenty of room for sinners in the heart and love of Christ! And I am going to give them an earnest, tender, affectionate invitation to come to Christ while yet there is room. You who have hitherto been strangers to the Grace of God. You who, as yet, have never feasted at the Gospel Banquet, you who have, until now, been content with this worlds frothy dainties and have never tasted that which is substantial and satisfying for time and for eternityto you, even to youcomes the message of our text, yet there is room.

I. My first question concerning the text is, WHERE IS THERE ROOM? And the answer is, there is room in the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness! There is room for you to be washed and to be made clean. Vast multitudes have gone into that Fountain black as the thickest nightand they have come up from the washing whiter than snow. Innumerable offenses have there been washed away, but the Fountain has lost none of its cleansing power, nor will it until the last elect soul has been washed therein, as Cowper so confidently and so truly sings

*Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood   
Shall never lose its power   
Till all the ransomed Church of God   
Is saved to sin no more!*

It is our joy to be able to assure you that in that blessed bath of cleansing, yet there is room!

There is room, too, in that chariot of love which carries the washed ones all the way to Heaventhat chariot of which Solomons was a type and of which we read, he made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. In this chariot there is room for millions moreand if you are washed in His precious blood, He who is greater than Solomon will take you up and carry you on and over the rough and rugged road of this wilderness worldand conduct you safely to His Fathers House above. You shall travel joyously in the best of company, so enter while there is room, Sinner, and there is room now!

There is room, too, in the Fathers great family . He has adopted an innumerable multitude of those who once were children of wrath and servants of Satan! He has selected some of the vilest of the sons and daughters of Adam, but they are washed, they are cleansed, they are regenerate and they have received the seal of their adoption into the family of God and are joyously crying, Abba, Father! But there is room for millions more in that great family! Earthly fathers, as a general rule, have no room for strangers in their homethe house is already crowded with their own boys and girlsso they cannot receive other peoples children into their family. But there is still room in the great Fathers heart for all who will come unto Him by Jesus Christ, His Son. All whom He has chosen unto eternal life have not yet believed in Jesus and been sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. All whom He intends to save have not yet been brought to recognize Him as their Father and their God, so again I say that there is still room in the great Fathers heart for all who will come unto Him by Jesus Christ, His Son!

There is room, too, in the visible Church here below . We gladly welcome every new convert and we say to each one   
*Come in, you blessed of the Lord,   
Stranger nor foe are thou!   
We welcome you with warm accord,   
Our friend, our Brother now.*

The Lord knows them that are His, but all that are the Lords are not yet added to His visible Church. Thousands of them stray in the paths of sinmillions of them are as yet like jewels hidden away in the mire, or pearls lying many fathoms deep in the caverns of the sea! There is still room for more stars in the diadem that adorn the brows of the Church on earth! There is still room for more golden candlesticks to give her light. She still has room for many more children to be dandled on her knees and to suck at her breastsuse whatever metaphor we may, we can still say, in the words of our textyet there is room.

There is room, too, in the ordinances of Gods House . There is room for you, Christian Brother or Sister, in the liquid tomb which is the emblem of your Saviors grave! You may be buried with Him by Baptism into death and rise from the baptistery in the likeness of His Resurrection, therefore to walk with Him in newness of life! There is room for you, too, at that Communion Table where, in eating bread and drinking wine, we spiritually eat Christs flesh and drink His blood and so prove that He dwells in us and we dwell in Him.

There is room for you at the childrens tableyou will not overcrowd us! We are not like the elder brother who was jealous because the prodigal was welcomed back to his fathers house and his fathers table. We shall have none the less enjoyment, but all the more, if you will come and join us at the feast of lovethere is abundant room for you there.

Better, still, and more to your souls solace, there is room for you in Heaven! The long procession has been streaming through the gates of pearl from the day when Abel, the protomartyr, entered the heavenly city, until this very moment, as I am speaking to you! The last emancipated soul has just flapped its wings for joy, left its mortal cage behind and entered into everlasting liberty! The redeemed from among men have been taking their appointed places before the Throne of God, waving their palms, wearing their crowns, playing their golden harps and singing their songs of victory! But there is still room in Heaven for many more! There are crowns there without heads to wear them and harps without hands to play themand mansions without tenants to inhabit them and streets of gold that shall have something lacking until you have trodden themif you are one of the Lords own people. There is room for multitudes whom God has chosento come to swell the hallelujah chorus of the skies! It is very sweet even now, but it has not yet reached its full force and grandeurit needs to have ten thousand times ten thousand voices added to the already mighty choirand then the glorious chorus shall roll up to the Throne of God louder than the noise of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! And He shall reign forever and ever!

What a dreary message I would have to deliver if I had to tell you that there was no room! Let me give you one or two illustrations. In passing over some of the more difficult passes of the Alps, the traveler sees small habitations by the side of the road, marked Refuge No. 1, Refuge No. 2, and so on, up to the hospice on the summit, and then down the other side more refuges similarly marked. When a storm comes on and the wind and snow beat into a mans face so that he cannot see his way, and he sinks more than knee-deep in the driftsit is a happy circumstance for him that, perhaps a little way ahead, there is a refuge where he and others in the same plight may find shelter till hospitable monks come and take them to the hospice, or send them on their way! Imagine that one dark night the snow is pouring down, the flakes fall so thickly that you cannot see a star, the wind howls among the Alps and the poor traveler, nearly blinded, staggers up to the door of the refugebut he sees outside of it a dozen or two other travelers all clustered together, nearly frozen to death, and they say to himThe refuge is crammed! We cant get in, so we must perish, though we have reached the door of the refuge but there is no room for us inside. Ah, but I have no such bad news as that to bring to you tonight! Crowded as you are here, this great building has scarcely room enough to hold youbut the love of Christ is not so cramped that I need say to you, There is no room here. Yet there is room. All who are inside the refuge are but a small number compared with those who are yet to come for, in later and brighter ages, of which this is but the dawn, we believe that conversion work will go on far more rapidly and that the Lords elect will be brought to Him in much greater numbers than in these days! Whether it will be so or not, it is our joy to tell you that yet there is room in the great Gospel Refuge which the Lord of the Way has so graciously provided for all who will enter it!

Here is another picture. There has been a wreck out there upon the coast. The ship has struck upon the rocks and she is fast going to pieces. Some of the poor mariners are clinging to the mastthey have been hanging there for hours. Heavy seas have broken over them and they can hardly retain their hold. Some of the crew have already become exhausted and have fallen off into the deepand the others who are clinging for dear life are almost frozen with cold! But look therea rocket goes upthey believe that they have been spotted and, after a while, they see that a lifeboat is coming to their rescue! Perhaps the brave men give a cheer as they row with all their might to let the pour shipwrecked sailors know that there is help at hand. As the lifeboat comes nearer, its captain cries, Oh, what a lot of men! What can we do with so many? We will take as many of you as we can, but there is not room for all. The men are helped off the wreck, one after the other, until they seem to fill the boat. Each mans place has two crammed into it, but at last the captain says, Its no use. We cant take any more. Our boat is so full that shell go down if we put in another man. Its all over with those poor souls that must be left behind, for before the gallant boat can make another trip, they must all have fallen into the waves of the sea and been lost.

But I have no such sad tale to tell you tonight, for my Masters Gospel Lifeboat has thus far taken in but few compared with those she will yet take! I know not how many she will hold, but this I do know, that a multitude which no man can number shall be found within her and, amid songs of everlasting joy, they shall all be safely landed on the blessed shore where rocks and tempests will never again trouble them! The lifeboat is not yet fullthere is still room in her for all who will trust in Jesus! Poor Mariner, give up clinging to that wreck on the rocks! Poor Sinner, give up clinging to your works and to your sins! There is room in the Gospel Lifeboat for you and all who will put themselves under the care of the great Captain of Salvation, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

II. Now we will change our view of the subject by asking and answering a second question, WHEN IS THERE ROOM? Lay the emphasis upon the word, yet, in the text. Yet there is room. Yet! Ages have marched along with solemn tramp, generations have followed generations and all have yielded their quota to the great Church of Jesus Christbut, yet there is room for millions more! There have been multitudes passing through the valley of repentance up to the Cross of Calvary! Multitudes beyond all human calculation have found peace and pardon in Christ! But, for all that, yet there is room! A few years ago the Churches of our land, and especially the Churches of Ireland, had a visitation of Divine Grace when many were converted to God. And in this Church we have had a revival that has lasted all the years of our pastorate. We have had no special season of revivalthere has been a continual revival, practically all the time, at New Park Street, at Exeter Hall, at the Surrey Gardens and here in this Tabernacle. The blessed work of conversion goes on, never slowly, but quite as fast as we can keep pace with it! The Lord is constantly adding to our numbers! Sometimes, as on the last occasion, 74 in a single month! On another occasion, a hundred! But we can still say, yet there is room, and if all the Churches in London and throughout the whole kingdom were to be multiplied exceedingly, we feel that we could still come to our pulpits as revival years passed over us and say, yet there is room.

Besides, Sinner, you are getting old now. Those gray hairs tell a tale of years that have passed. Your youth fled long ago and your early manhood is now overGod knows how you have spent itbut you are here, tonight, like an old barren tree, almost ready for the everlasting burning unless Sovereign Grace shall save you even now! And I am here to tell you that yet there is room! How old are you? Are you sixty? Are you past seventy? Can you look back over 80 years? Are you getting close to ninety? Well, even then, yet there is room, for you and if you had outnumbered the years of Moses, yes, and if you had lived as long as Methuselah lived, I would still say to you, yet there is room!

Think, too, of the many times that you have rejected Christ. Again and again the invitations of the great Giver of the Gospel Feast have been sent to you, but you have refused them all! Before I was born, some of you old people had many loving warnings and entreaties from godly ministers who have long since gone Home. You were not altogether unmoved by your mothers prayers and your fathers supplications, and now, in these latter times, it has pleased God to speak to you by one who is so much younger than youin words that would burn if they could, coming as they do, red-hot from a heart that is all on fire with love to your souls! My words have often reached your ears and have sometimes reached your consciences, too, yet the Lord knows how many vows have been made in this House and broken at the doorhow many impressions have been made during the sermonand obliterated before you have reached your homes! There are some of you who will find in me a swift witness against you at the bar of God! If you should say that you never heard the Gospel, I will testify that you have heard it plainly and faithfully declared time after time. I have not preached as I wish I could, but you have always been able to understand my message! I have not sought to find gaudy words and polished periods with which I might tickle your ears, but in Gods name, I have told you that unless you repent and believe, you shall surely perish! And I have preached to you the love of Jesus and pointed you to His wounds and bid you look unto Him and live. Yet you have rejected every warning and every invitation that I have given you up till now. But, notwithstanding that, I am still sent to say to you, Yet there is roomyet there is room.

It may be that some of you have been adding sin to sin till you have now got to such a pitch as you never dreamed that you would reach. There is that young man over there in the gallery, who used to be at every Prayer Meeting and used to attend one of the Bible classes and all the services. You know, young man, to whom I am referringthat young man did run well, but he first went astray just a little bit and then still morethen he went from bad to worse and now he has gone to the worst of all! Let it never be told where it may reach his fathers ears, what sin he has committed only this week! Ah, young man, if you had been told, even a little while ago, that you would sin thus, you would have said, as Hazael said to Elisha, But what? Is your servant a dog that he should do this great thing? You would not have believed yourself capable of falling so low as to commit the offense in which you have now indulged! And I venture to prophesy that although you think you have repented of it, you will return to it as the dog turns to his own vomit and as the sow that was washed returns to her wallowing in the mire! There are some sinners who never seem to be satisfied till they have gone to the full limit of their tether. They are like the waves of the sea that must keep on advancing until they have reached their flood tide and can go no further. Yet Sinner, though all this is so terribly true of you, though you have gone as far as you can go in sin, yet there is room even for you in that cleansing Fountain of which I spoke a few minutes ago!

Probably I am addressing some who will never see another year roll over their heads. No, I may say that it is an absolute certainty concerning not merely one or two, but concerning many here present! I do not know how many out of the six or seven thousand persons now present will, according to the ordinary rate of mortality, die within a year from this night, but certainly a considerable number will. Therefore I am not talking fanatical nonsense, but solid truth! There are some persons here who will not even see another month on earthand very many who will never see another year. And there may be at least one here who will not see even another day! How near this makes us feel to the unseen world, how close to death! I have known many such cases as this. One of the officers or members of the Church meets me as I am coming in, and says to me, Do you remember So-and-So? Yes, I think I do. Where does he sit? Well, there is his seat. Oh, yes! I reply, I remember him well. What about him? Why, says the friend, last Sunday morning, as he was walking home after the service here, he was taken ill, went straight to bed and died. Some of you know the Brother to whom I am referring. Not long ago, another friend said to me, Do you know Mr. So-and-So? Oh, yes! I answered, why do you ask? Well, dear Pastor, he said, the Lord has been pleased to call her to Himself quite suddenly. It is often thusthe stroke falls where it was least expected and God, in a moment, calls one and another of our friends to meet their final doom. We cannot say to any of those who have been called away from our midst, yet there is room, but we can say it to you who are here!

III. I think I have dwelt long enough on that word, yet. I want in closing to ask another question, WHY IS THERE ROOM?

How do we know that there is still room? Well, our text is enough to make us sure, even if we had nothing else, but we have other reasons for knowing, yet there is room. And the first reason is because the decree of election is vast and wide. Those individuals who try to caricature our doctrinal sentiments are in the habit of saying that we teach that God has chosen a few to be saved and left the great majority of mankind to perish. They know that we have never said any such thing! And they also know that no man of any standing in our denomination has ever said any such a thing! On the contrary, we believe that God has ordained a countless host, so numerous that no man can number it, who shall be everlastingly saved! And we think we have some warrant for believing that the number of the saved will vastly exceed the number of the lost, that in all things Christ may have the preeminence. Certainly, whatever may be our opinion upon that matter, we rejoice that the lines of Divine Election are not narrow, that the chosen people of God are not a mere handfuland we believe that when the time comes for the great King to make up His jewels, it shall be found that the case contains such multitudes of them that they shall be beyond all human calculation! It is our joy to know that God has chosen a great host to be saved and, as they have not all been saved yet, it is clearly proved that, yet there is room!

Again, we believe that Christ offered an Infinite Sacrifice for the redemption of His people. We cannot look at His blessed Person as the GodMan, Christ Jesus, without believing that the sufferings of such a Substitute for sinners must have had an infinite valueso we are fully persuaded that no limit can be set to the merit of Christs deathalthough we also believe that Christ had a definite purpose in His death which cannot be frustratedand that this purpose was the salvation, not of all menbut of as many as His Father had given Him, according to His own words, I lay down My life for the sheep. And according to Pauls words, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Yet so great a Sacrifice as that of Christ could not have been offered without a great objective in view! In fact, He told His disciples that the Son of Man came...to give His life a ransom for many. We therefore believe that in the great fold wherein the Good Shepherd preserves His blood-bought sheep, there is yet room for many more to enter!

Further, we come to the same conclusion by considering the great design of God in the whole of His Providential arrangementsin the permission of the Fall and in the wondrous plan by which the Fall, itself, is made to minister to Gods Glory by being a foil, a dark background, to set forth the brightness of the Divine Grace which delivers sinners from eternal ruin! We believe that the objective of the Covenant of Grace and of the plan of Redemption so amazing as that which is revealed in the Scriptures could not have been a small one! It must be a great multitude of redeemed souls that will satisfy Christ for the terrible travail of soul that He enduredit cannot be an insignificant company that will be won by His almighty hands and His holy arms, but a mighty host who shall be the fulfillment of the Lords eternal design and bring to Him due honor and glory forever and ever! Therefore, also for this reason we are persuaded that yet there is room.

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, when we consider the prevalence of Jesus plea and the Omnipotence of the Holy Spirits agency. When we see the daily preparation which God makes for sending out fresh ministers of the Gospel. When we understand that the earth is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seaand because we believe that the millennial reign of Christ will certainly begin at the time that God has appointedwe are persuaded that there are unnumbered millions yet to come to the Gospel Feast and, therefore, we still cry, yet there is room! At that great banquet there shall not be one seat that shall be empty at the last! God has made provision for just as many as will come and it shall be found that the provision is sufficient for all the guests who accept the Kings invitationthat the great eternal decision of God was not frustrated and that even the perversity of mans wicked will, which keep him from coming to God, shall be made, somehow or other, to reflect honor on the great Giver of the feast! Not a chair shall be vacant at that feast and not one of the redeemed shall be missing when the role is called at that day! We have not yet reached that period, so we can still say, yet there is room.

Well, Sinner, as it is true that yet there is room, we have a word of warning to say to you. There is room in the precious blood of Christ, there is room at the Gospel Feast, there is room in the Church on earth, there is room in Heavenbut if you will not occupy this room, I must solemnly tell you that there is room for you elsewhere! Alas, there is room in Hell! There may hardly be prisons enough for all the criminals on earth, but there is room for them in Hell! There are nations that forget God. There are myriads that hate Him, there are millions more that neglect His great Salvation, but there is room for them all in Hell if they will not repent and believe the Gospel! Blasphemer, there is room in Hell for you! Despiser of Gods Day and of Gods Word, there is room in Hell for you! And for some of you it may be that there are only a few more weeks or daysand then you will enter upon your terrible heritage! Grow on, you tares, till you ripen, and then, when you are bound up in bundles to be burned, let the bundles be ever so big, there is room for them all in Hell! Proud boasters, you may speak what Jude calls, great swelling words, now, declaring that you will fight the matter out with God, but you will find that in Hell there is room to humble you and room to destroy you there to all eternity! Is it not enough to make a mans heart break even to think of such a terrible doom? Then what will it be to have to endure it without any hope of release forever? I remind you again that some of you will be there before long unless you repent! Oh, by the living God, in whose name I speak to you, I do entreat you, if you love yourselves, consider these things! For if you will not have Christ as your Savior, you will have His wrath remaining upon you forever and ever! If the message of God is despised by you, how shall you escape if you neglect so great a Salvation? Sinner, are you resolved to make your bed in Hell? Soul, have you set your heart on it? Will you tonight give your hand to Satan and promise to be his slave forever? Stop, Man! This may be the last time that your conscience will ever be alarmed, so I plead with you to trust in Christ before I send you away to your homes. Think seven times before you do reject Him this once more, lest the slighted, grieved, almighty Spirit should depart from you and never strive with you again!

My last thought which I pass on to every unconverted sinner, is this as there is room in the blood of Christ, as there is room in Heaven, why not for me? Will not each sinner here also say, why not for me? Soul, what does God say to you tonight? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. So this is what you have to doobey the gracious message and believe in Christ! To believe on Christ is to trust Him and I am sure that He deserves your trust. He is God, able to save youand He is Man, willing to save you. He would not have died if He had not loved sinners. He stands pleading with you tonight, blessed be His name, and though it has been with stern words that He has spoken to your conscience, now He asks you to trust Him and He says that if you do, you shall be saved! Soul, will you trust Him now? I hope the Spirit of God will lead you to say, Yes, I will trust Jesus tonight. I feel utterly unworthy, but then He died to save the unworthy. My heart is very hard, but I know that He can soften it. I do not feel my need of Him as I should feel it, but He did not tell me I was to feel my need and make that my qualification. He said, Let him that is thirsty, come. And whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely. I will venture to come to Him while yet there is room.

Perhaps the black doubt comes to you, Is there room for me? My answer to that question is thisyou are commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! It is impossible for you to do that and yet be lost! You shall find that there is room for you, room which no one but yourself can occupy, room in that Kingdom of which Christ says that it was ordained for you before the foundation of the world! Your business, Sinner, is to trust Christ just as you are, now, and just where you are! O my Hearers, you whose souls are committed to my trust, I feel that I must have your souls for my Master! He knows that I care for no wages but your immortal souls! He knows that if He denies me your souls, I shall feel that I have labored in vain and spent my strength for nothing. This year God has blessed the Word to many, many hearts! Hardly a day has passed without someone being blessed and not a sermon have I preached in this Tabernacle without hearing afterwards of conversions through itand I sincerely trust that it may continue. Lord, speak to hearts that have resisted You until now! Sovereign Grace, there is nothing that can stand against YouYour goings forth are mighty and Irresistible! You speak, and it is done, You command and it stands fast forever! Speak, Lord, and Your servants shall hear and this night they shall say, We will come unto You while yet there is room.

May God grant that many shall come to Jesus this very moment, for His dear names sake! Amen.   
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 14:7-24.**

Verse 7. And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms. This parable was by far the best part of the entertainment of the day!

7-9. Saying unto them, When you are bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest place lest a more honorable man than you is bidden of him; and he that bade you and him comes and says to you, Give this man place; and you begin with shame to take the lowest place. For, of course, the next room is full, and the next, and the only vacant seat, when the feast has begun, will probably be in the very lowest room of the house.

10. But when you are bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place, that when he that bade you come, he may say unto you, Friend, go up higher. Then shall you have worship in the presence of them that sit at the meal with you. Note that our Savior was not just then talking to His disciples, or else He would have given more spiritual reasons for His advice. But, speaking to the people who were gathered as guests at the Pharisees house, He appealed to them with an argument suitable to themselves. We may, however, extract the marrow from this bone! Let us not covet the highest place. Let us not desire honor among men. In the Church of God the way upward is downward. He that will do the lowest work shall have the highest honor. Our Master washed His disciples feet and we are never more honored than when we are permitted to imitate His example.

11. For whoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. There is a conspiracy of Heaven and earth and Hell to put down proud men, neither good nor badthe highest nor the lowest can endure those who are self-exalted! But if you are willing to take your right place, which is probably the lowest, you shall soon find honor in the midst of your brethren!

12. Then said He also to him that bade Him, When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbor lest they also bid you again, and a recompense is made you. Our Savior, you see, keeps to one line of instruction. It was a feast, so He used the feast to teach another lesson. It is always well, when mens minds are running in a certain direction, to make use of that particular current. When a feast is uppermost in the minds of men, it is no use starting another subject. So the Savior rides upon the back of the banquet, making it to be His steed! Note His advice to His hostTry to avoid doing that for which you will be recompensed. If you are rewarded for it, the transaction is over. But if not, then it stands recorded in the Book of God and it will be recompensed to you in the Great Day of Account.

13, 14. But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. It should be your ambition to have something set down to your credit at the resurrection of the just. If you do someone a kindness with a view to gaining gratitude, you will probably be disappointed. And even if you should succeed, what is the gratitude worth? You have burned your firewood, you have seen the brief blaze, and there is an end of it. But if you get no present return for your holy charity, so much the better for you!

15, 16. And when one of them that sat at the meal with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God. Then said He unto him. As if to prove what a privilege it is to be permitted to eat bread, there, but that the persons who appear most likely to do so will never taste of itand that the most unlikely persons will be brought into it. Jesus said unto him.

16, 17. A certain man made a great supper and bade many: and sent his servants at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all  
things are now ready. [See Sermon #1354, Volume 23ALL THINGS ARE READY, COME Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] They had

accepted the invitation, so they were pledged to be present but, in the meantime, they had changed their minds with regard to their intended hostand they were unwilling to grace his feast.

18. And they all with one consent began to make excuses. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it: I pray you have me excused. Yet it was supper time and people do not generally go to see pieces of ground at night! And if the man had bought the land, he ought to have seen it before he bought it! People do not generally buy land without looking at it. A bad excuse is worse than none. [See Sermon

#578, Volume 10A BAD EXCUSE IS WORSE THAN NONERead/download the entire sermon, free   
of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] and this is one of those excuses which will not hold water for a minute!

19. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to inspect them: I pray you have me excused. He pretended that he had bought five yoke of oxen without inspecting them and that he wanted to inspect them after he had bought them, when, of course, he could not cancel the bargain! A likely story! But, when men want to make an excuse, and they have no truth to serve as the raw material, they can always make one out of a lie!

20. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot  
come. [See Sermon #2122, Volume 36A STRAIGHT TALKRead/download the entire sermon, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This man did not ask to be excusedhe had married a wife, so that settled the matter! Of course he could not go to the feast.

21. So that servant came and told his lord these things. Every true servant of Christ should go to his Lord and tell him what reception his Masters message has had. After service, we sometimes have an enquirers meeting, but after every sermon there ought to be a meeting of the servant with his Lord to tell the result of the errand on which he has been sent. Sometimes, as in this case, it will be a very painful meeting as the servant tells how his Masters message has been despised and His invitation rejected.

21. Then the master of the house being angry. Notice what the Lord does even when He is angryHe invents some new way of showing mercy to men! The master of the house being angry.

21. Said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. Happy anger that explodes in blessing! The justly angry master turns away from the bidden ones who had insulted him and sends for those who had not hitherto been bidden, that they might come to the feast!

22. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as you have commanded, and yet there is room. They fetched in all the poor people, the maimed, the halt and the blind whom they could findit was a great gathering and a strange gatheringyet there was still room for more guests at the banquet!

23. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. [See Ser  
mon #227, Volume 5COMPEL THEM TO COME INRead/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Bring in highwaymen and hedge-birds, those that have no place where to lay their headsfetch them in by force if necessary, that my house may be filled.

24. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. They were invited, yet they would not come. But others shall come and fill the tables and the great feast shall be furnished with guests! No provisions of mercy will ever be wasted. If you who are the sons and daughters of godly parents, or you who are the regular hearers of the Word will not have Christ, then others shall! If you hear, but hear in vain, then the rank outsiders shall be brought in and they shall feed upon the blessed provisions of the Infinite Mercy of God and God shall be glorified! But terrible will be your doom when the great Giver of the Gospel Feast says concerning you and those like you, None of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2122 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A STRAIGHT TALK   
NO. 2122

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JANUARY 12, 1890.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 19, 1889.

**I cannot come.   
Luke 14:20.**

THERE are different ways of replying to the invitation of the Gospel when you mean to refuse it. They are all, at best, bad, and they may all be classed under one head, for, they all with one consent began to make excuses. But yet some are more decently worded than others and have a greater show of reason about them. The first two sets of people who were invited to the supper said to the servant, apologetically, with some appearance of courtesy, I pray you have me excused. But the third man did not beat about the bush at all, or pray to be excusedhe said tersely, bluntly, sharplyI cannot come. This was a final reply. He did not intend, nor wish to come to the supper. I cannot come, was a snappish reply but as he had married a wife, he thought the idea of his coming was utterly unreasonable and he needed no sort of excuse.

Now, what did that mean? Well, it meant that he thought very lightly of the giver of the feast. He had no respect for this certain man, who had made a great supper. He had an opportunity of slighting him by refusing his invitation and he did so outspokenly, saying, I cannot come. It also showed that he had a very low opinion of the supper itself. It might be a respectable meal, but he did not need ithe could have quite as good a supper at home. He was better off than those people in the streets. Those hedge birds might be glad enough to get a supper for nothing, but he was not dependent upon anybody and he could do very well for himself.

Do you not know many in this world who have no opinion of Christ, no love to God? Religion is to them mere nonsensean unpractical, dreamy matter about which they have no time to concern themselves. It is a pitiful thing that they will not even think of the God whom angels worship! And the Christ who is the loveliest of the lovelyin Him they see no beauty! And the priceless provisions of mercy, the pardon of sin, the salvation of the soul, Heaven of Godthey neglect these things as if they did not need themor could get them whenever they please. Thousands are proudly independent of the free Grace of Godthey are good enough and virtuous enoughthey need not cry for mercy as the wicked and profane.

In their own judgment they are quite able to fight their own way to Heaven. They need not the charities of the Gospel. Contempt of the great Feast-Maker and contempt of the feast itselfthese two pieces of proud disdain induce a man to say, I cannot come. But there was more than common pride in this brief, gruff speech, for this man had, at the first,

made a promise to come. He had been invited to come and it is implied in the parable that he had, at that time, accepted the invitation. He had accepted the cards of invitation to the supper and, though he had done so, he now flies in the face of himself and says, I cannot come.

I think that I am addressing some here who have pledged themselves many a time to come to Christ. If I remember rightly you asked the prayers of friends and promised that you would be in real earnest. You looked your wife in the face and said, I hope that it will not be long before I am with you in the Church of God and shall no longer have to go away and leave you alone at the Lords Table. You asked some of your Christian friends to make a point of praying for youbut you have never carried out your intention of becoming a true Christian. Your resolutions may be still read in Gods eternal book of recordbut they are there as witnesses to your falseness and changeableness. The counterfoils are there but there is no fulfillment of any of the resolutions.

God remembers them although you have forgotten to carry them out. You accepted the invitation on the spur of the moment but when worldliness got the upper hand with you, you went back to your old obstinacy and said, I cannot come. Perhaps you have not said it in quite as sharp a tone as I used just now, but it has come to the same thing, for you have not come to the Gospel Supper. It matters little whether you say it angrily or quietlyif you do not come, the practical result is the same. I think I hear some of you, even now, say, Do not ask me so often. I cannot come! It is of no use to worry me about it. I do not wish to be uncivil or unkind. Though I said I would come, I retract my words! I cannot come.

In saying, I cannot come, the man intended, as it were, to dismiss the matter. He wished to be understood as having made up his mind and he was no longer open to argument. He did not parley. He did not talk. He just said, matter-of-factly, I need no more persuading! I cannot come and that settles it. Certain of our hearers have come to such a condition of heart that they would gladly silence our Gospel expostulationswith a kind but determined tone they would sayI cannot come. Do not trouble me anymore.

I suppose that this man, after he had made that positive declaration, felt that there was truth in what he had stated. He said, Therefore I cannot come. He had a reason to support him in what he said and he went home, sat down and enjoyed himself. He felt that he was a righteous man, quite as good as those who had gone to the supper and perhaps rather better. He could not blame himself, for when a man cannot do it, why, of course, he cannot do it! And why should he be censured for an impossibility? I cannot comehow can I help that? So he sat down with a cool indifference to eat his own supper. It was nothing to him whether the great giver of the feast was grieved or notwhether his oxen and fatlings were wasted or not. He had said it to his conscience so often that he half believed itI cannot come, and there is no disputing it.

I have no doubt that many who have never come to Christ have made themselves content to be without Him by the belief that they cannot come. Although the impossibility, if it did exist, would involve the greatest of all calamities, yet they speak of it with very little concern. Practically, they say, I cannot be saved. I must remain an unbeliever. What an awful thing for any mortal to say! Yet you have said it till you almost believe it and you wish us, now, to leave you quite alone for this dreadful reason. You do not want to be troubled tonight. The text already begins to startle you a little and you do not like it. You are almost sorry that you are here.

If the Lord helps me, I will trouble you far more before you go out of this place! I have heavy tidings from the Lord for you! I shall endeavor, if I can, to pull away those downy pillows from your sleepy head and wake you up to immediate anxiety lest you perish in your sins! With kindly importunity I will plead with you and try to show you that this little speech of yours, I cannot come, is a wretched speech! You must throw it to the winds and prove that you can come by coming at once and receiving of the great feast of love and honoring Him that spreads it for hungry souls.

Two or three things I would like to say about this case, for it is very serious. It was bad enough for this man to say, I cannot come, but it is far worse for you to say, I cannot come to Christ. Remember, if the invited guests did not come, and come at once, they could never come for there was only that one supper and not a series of banquets. The great man who made the feast did not intend to prepare another. A very grave offense would be committed by their not coming to the one supper.

My dear Hearers, there is only one time of Divine Grace for you and if that is ended you will not have a second opportunity! There is only one Christ Jesusthere is no more sacrifice for sin. There is only one way of eternal love and mercydo not forsake it. I pray you, do not turn away from the one door of life, the one way of salvation! If it is slighted now and the feast is overas it will be when you diethen you will have lost the great privilege and you will have been guilty of a gross neglect, from the consequences of which you never will be able to escape! Note this and beware!

Besides, it is not merely a supper that you will lose when you say, I cannot come. To lose a supper would be little and might soon be set right when breakfast came round. But you lose eternal life and that lost in time can never be found in eternity! You lose the pardon of sin, reconciliation to God, adoption into the family of lovethose are heavy losses! You lose the joy of faith for life and you lose comfort in deathwho can estimate this damage? Lose not your immortal soul! Oh, lose not that! For if you gain the whole world it will not recompense you for such a loss! Lose what you will, but lose not your soul, I pray you! Seek that salvation without which it had been better for you that you had never been born.

Besides, once more, if you do not come to Christ it will imply the greatest insult that you can put upon your Maker. You have already grieved Him by breaking His Lawsbut what will be His indignation when you refuse His mercy? When you turn your back on His Son? When you refuse not only your God, but your crucified Savior hanging there with outstretched arms, bleeding His life away, that He may save you? Do not turn your back on your own redemption! No blood was ever sprinkled on the threshold of an Israelites house for he must not trample on itthat

would be ruinous, indeed. The blood was on the lintel and on the two side posts, but never underfoot. Trample not upon the blood of Christ! And you will do so if you refuse His great salvation. If you will not come to Him to be saved, you have as good as said that you will be damned rather than be loved by Godthat you will be damned rather than be saved through Jesus Christ His Son. It will prove a costly insult to you, as well as a grievous affront to your Lord.

Having said so much by way of preface, I am now going to take those words, I cannot come, and handle them a little with the hope that you may grow ashamed of them.

I. First, this man declared, I cannot come because, he said, I HAVE MARRIED A WIFE. He had promised to come to the supper and he was bound to fulfill his promise. Why did he want to get married just then? Surely he had not been compelled to marry all in a hurry so that he could not keep engagements already made! He was bound to keep his promise to the maker of the feast and that promise was claimed of him by the messenger.

He could not say that his wife would not let him come. Such a declaration might be true in England but in the East the men are always masters of the situation and women seldom bear rule in the family! No Oriental would say that his wife would not let him come! Nor in these Western regions, where the woman more nearly gains her rights, can any man truthfully say that his wife will not allow him to be a Christian. I do not believe that any of you will be able to say, when you come to die, that your wife was responsible for your not being a Christian.

Most men would be angry if we told them that they were hen-pecked and could not call their souls their own. He must be a fool, indeed, who would let a woman lead him down to Hell against his will! The fact is, a man is a mean creature when he tries to throw the blame of his sin upon his wife. I know that Father Adam set us a bad example in that respect, but the fact that this was a part of the sin which caused the ruin of our race should act as a beacon to us. You certainly, as a man, ought not to demean yourself so much as to say, I cannot come, for my wife will not let me.

If one of you, however, continues to whine, My wife is my ruin. I am unable to be a Christian because of my wife, I must ask you a question or two before I believe your pitiable story. Do you let her rule you in everything else? Does she keep you at home each evening? Does she pick all your companions for you? Why, my dear Man, if I am not much mistaken, you are a self-willed, cross-grained, pig-headed animal about everything else! And then, when it comes to the matter of religion, you turn round and whine about being governed by your wife? I have no patience with you!

It is more than probable that the very best thing that could happen to you would be to have your wife on the throne of England for the next few years. Upon such a solemn matter as this do not talk nonsense. You know that the blame lies with yourself aloneif you wished to seek the best thingsthe little woman at home would be no hindrance to you. This man said, I cannot come. Why? Because he had a wife! Strange plea! For surely that was a reason why he should come and bring her with him!

If any man, unhappily, has a wife opposed to the things of God, instead of saying, I cannot be a Christian, for I have an unconverted wife, he should seek for double Grace that he may win his wife to Christ. If a woman laments that she has an unconverted husband, let her live nearer to God that she may save her husband. If a servant has an unconverted master, let him labor with double diligence to glorify God that he may win his master. Thus you see there are two reasons why you should come to the Gospel banquetnot only for your own sake, but for the sake of your unconverted relatives.

My neighbors candle is blown outis that a reason why I must not light mine? No, but that is a reason why I should be all the more careful to keep mine burning, that I may light my neighbors candle, too. It is a pity that my wife should be lost, but I cannot help her by being lost myself. No, but I may help her if I take my stand and follow Christ the more resolutely because my wife opposes me. Good Man, do not allow your wife to draw you aside! Good Woman, do not let your husband hinder you! Do not say, I cannot attend the house of God, nor be a Christian while I have such a husband as I have. No, that is the reason why you should take your stand the more bravely in the name of God that, by your example, those whom you love may be rescued from destruction.

How do you know, O Wife, but that you may save your unbelieving husband? How do you know, O Servant, but that you may save your unbelieving master? I remember hearing Mr. Jay tell a story about a Nonconformist servant girl who went to live in a family of worldly people who attended the Church of England. Although they were not real Believers they were outside buttresses of the Church but they had very little to do with the inside of itand outsiders are generally the most bigoted.

They were very angry with their servant for going to the little Meeting House and threatened to discharge her if she went again. But she went all the same and very kindly but firmly assured them that she must continue to do so. At last she received notice to gothey could not, as good Church peoplehave a Dissenter living with them! She took their rough treatment very patiently and it came to pass that the day before she was to leave her situation a conversation took place somewhat of this sort. The master said, It is a pity, after all, that Jane should go. We never had such a good girl. She is very industrious, truthful, and attentive.

The wife said, Well, I have thought that it is hardly the thing to send her away for going to her Chapel. You always speak up for religious liberty and it does not look quite like religious liberty to turn our girl away for worshipping God according to her conscience. I am sure she is a deal more careful about her religion than we are about ours. So they talked it over and they decided, She has never answered us pertly, nor found fault with us about our going to Church. Her religion is a greater comfort to her than ours is to us. We had better let her stay with us, and go where she likes.   
Yes, said the husband, and I think we had better go and hear the

minister that she goes to hear. Evidently she has got something that we have not got. Instead of sending her away for going to Chapel, we will go with her next Sunday and judge the matter for ourselves. And they did, and it was not long before the master and mistress were members of that same Church!

Do not say, therefore, I cannot come because my master and mistress object to it. Do not make idle excuses out of painful facts which are reasons why you should be more determined than ever, even if you have to go to Heaven alone, that you will be a follower of Christ. Keep to your resolve and you may entertain the hope and belief that you will, by His Grace, lead others to the Saviors feet.

II. A second reason is even more common. It is not everybody who can say, I have married a wife, but everywhere you can meet with a person who pleads, I HAVE NO TIME. You say, Sir, I cannot attend to religion, for I have no time. I remember hearing an old lady say to a man who said that he had no time, Well, you have got all the time there is. I thought that it was a very conclusive answer. You have had the time and you still have all the time there iswhy do you not use it?

Nobody has more than 24 hours in a day and you have no less. You have no time? That is very singular! What have you done with ityou certainly have had it! Time flies with you, I know, but so does it with me and with everybody. What do you do with it? Oh, I have no time, says one. I say again, you have had the time and that time was due, in part, to a solemn consideration of the things of God. You have robbed God of that part of time which was due to Him and you have given up to some inferior thing what your great Lord and Master could rightly claim for the highest purposes.

You have time enough for common things. See here, I never meet any of you in the middle of the day in the street in your shirtsleeves. I do not find you going up and down Cheapside half-dressed. Oh, no, of course not! We have time to put on our clothes. You have time to dress your bodies and no time to dress your souls with the robe of Christs righteousness? Do not tell me that! I do not meet any one of our friends saying, towards evening, I am ready to faint, for I have had nothing to eat since I got up. I have had no time to get a morsel of meat. No, no! They have had their breakfast and they have had their dinner, and so on.

Oh, yes, we have time to eat, says one. Do you tell me that you have time to feed your bodies and that God has not given you time in which to feed your souls? Why, it is not commonsense! Such statements will not hold water for a moment! You must have time to feed your souls if you have time to feed your bodies! People find time to look in the mirror and wash their faces and brush their hair. Have you no time whatever to look at yourself, to see your spiritual spots and to wash in the fountain that is open for sin and for uncleanness? O dear Sirs, you have time for common things and you must certainly have time for those much more serious and important matters which concern your souls and immortality!

You have no time? How is this, when you waste a good deal? How much do many of us spend in silly talk? How much time do certain persons spend in frivolous amusements? I have heard people say that they have no time whom I am sure I do not know what they can have to occupy themselves! Are there not many people about who, if they were tied in a knot and thrown into the Bay of Biscay, would be missed by nobody for they do no good to any mortal being? They are living without an object purposeless, aimless livesand yet they talk about not having time!

Such pretences will not do. When you plead with God, say something that looks like commonsense. You have no time and yet you undertake more secular work? You keep a shop, do you not? Yes, I have a large shop. You are going to enlarge it, are you not? Will you have time, do you think, to attend to it when the business grows? Oh, yes, I dare say that I shall find timeat any rate, I must make time, somehow or other.

You are going to take a second shop, are you not? How will you manage it? Oh, I shall find time. Yes, my dear Sirs, you can find time for all those enlargements and speculations and engagements! Now let me be frank with you and say that you could find time for thought about your

soul if you had a mind to do so. To plead that you have no time for religion is a fraud! It will not do! It is lying to God to say that you have no time! When a man wants to do a thing, if he has no time, he makes time. I beg the idle man not to go on deceiving himself with the notion that he has no time.

Where theres a will theres a way. Where there is a heart to religion there is plenty of time for it. Blame your unwilling minds and not your scanty hours! You will have time enough when your hearts are once turned in the right direction. Besides, time is not the great matter. Did the Lord demand of you a months retirement from business? Did we command you to spend two days a week in prayer? Did we tell you that you could not be saved unless you shut yourself up an hour every morning for meditation? I would to God you could have an hour for meditation! But, if you cannot, who has demanded it of you?

The command is that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and forsake your sinand this is a matter which will not interfere with your daily work. A man can turn the potters wheel and pray. A man can lay bricks and pray. A man can drive the carriage and pray. A man can walk behind a plow and yet he can be walking with God. A woman can scrub a floor and commune with God. A man can be riding on horseback and yet he can still be in communion with the Most High. A woman can be sewing dresses and growing in Divine Grace. It is not a matter in which time comes in so much as to interfere with any of the ordinary duties of life.

Therefore throw away that excuse and do not say any longer, I cannot come because I have no time. At once repent of your sin and believe in the Lord Jesusand then all your time will be free for the service of the Lord and yet you will have not a moment less for the needful duties of your calling.

III. There is a third form of this excuse and a very common oneI

HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO. Now, come on! I will have you by the throat over that. I shall contradict you daily. You have nothing more important to do. That would be utterly impossible! Nothing under Heaven can be of one-hundredth part of the importance of your being reconciled to God and saved through Jesus Christ! What is that more important business? To make money? Where is the importance of that? You may get a pile of it and the net result will be greater care and the more to leave when you die!

But you tell me you must have an opportunity for study. Well, that is better, but what are you going to study? Science? Art? Politics? Are these important compared with the saving of your soul? Why, if you have an educated mind and it is lost, it will be as bad to lose it in culture and learning as to lose it in ignorance. Your first duty is to be right with your God who made you! Put nothing before your God. Has Christ redeemed you? Rest not till you know the truth of that redemption by being reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Nothing can be so important to a man as to be obedient to his Maker and enjoy his Makers love. Nothing, therefore, can be so important to a man as to be pardoned through the Savior and changed by the power of the Holy Spirit from an enemy of God into a friend of God.

Oh! you say, But my business occupies so much of my time. Yes, but do you not know that very likely your business would go on better if you were right with God? Many a time a business goes wrong because the man is wrongand sometimes it is even incumbent upon God to be at cross-purposes with a man because a man is at cross-purposes with Him. If you walk disobediently towards Him, He will walk contrary to youbut when you are obedient to Him, He can make other things subservient to you.

In a little church on the Italian mountains I saw, among many absurd paintings, one picture which struck me. There was a plowman who had turned aside at a certain hour to pray. The rustic artist drew him upon his knees before the opened heavens and, lest there should be any waste of time occasioned by his devotion, an angel was going on with the plowing for him! I like the idea. I do not think an angel ever did go on with a mans plowing while he was praying, but I think that the same result often comes to pass and that when we give our hearts to God and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things are added unto us.

If religion does not make you richer, which it may not do, it will make you more content with what you have. The blessing of God with a dinner of herbs will make it better than a stalled ox without that benediction. He that would make the best of this world and have the greatest enjoyment here of the truest and best kind will do well to give his first attention to his Saviorand his whole heart to faith in Himand diligence in His service. You have no more important business, I am quite sure, that the business which concerns God and eternity.

IV. I have heard some use the excuse I CANNOT AFFORD TO BE A CHRISTIAN. Well, my Friend, let us have a talk about that. Cost you more than you can afford? What do you mean? What cost? Cost you money? It need not. It will cost you no more than you like to spend upon it with a glad heart. God will give you a generous spirit which will make you love to support His cause and to help the poor and contribute your share to all Christian mission work. But in the Kingdom of Christ there is no taxation!

Giving becomes a gratification, liberality a luxury! Nothing will be dragged from you by force. Surely our God abhors money that comes into His treasury by anything but the freewill offerings of loving hearts. It will not cost you much in that way, I am sure, for you are only to give as God has prospered you. Suppose man should say, Well, I must take a seat in the chapel if I would comfortably hear the Gospel. Very well. Will it be unjust that you bear your proportion of necessary expenses in supporting the man who gives all his time, thought and ability to you? Will you pay as much in a year to hear the Gospel as many pay for one night at the play?

Yes, and do not many at a horserace spend a hundred times more than they ever gave throughout their whole existence either to the poor or to the Church of God? What you save by holy, gracious, thrifty habits will render this no loss to you, but a gain! Oh, but I meant that I could not afford it, for I should have to lose several friends. Is that friend worth keeping who is an enemy to God? The woman who would lead you away from God or the man who would keep you out of Heavenare friends of that sort worth having? Be brave and end a connection which will otherwise endlessly connect you with the bottomless pit.

Oh, says one, but I mean that I should lose so much in trade. Ah, well, I will not ask you to explain what you mean by thatfor there is an ugly look about that statement. You know more about your trade than I do. No doubt there are trades which pander to the vices of men and become all the more profitable in proportion to the growth of drunkenness and impurity. These must be given up! Moreover, there are traders who live by puffery and lying and cheatingand I do not recommend you to profess to be a Christian if that is your line of things. It is better to give up all profession of religion when you go in for unrighteous gain. What? Did I hear a hint about adulteration? Did I also hear that you do not give full weight and true measure? Ah, my dear Fellow, give up that game at once, whether you become a Christian or not! But certainly, if that is what you mean, the loss of dishonest profits will be a great gain to youboth for this life and the next.

Well, says one, I should have to give up a good many pleasures. Pleasures which block the road to Heaven ought to be given up at once! You may think me a very melancholy sort of person but I fancy that I am about as happy as any man in England. I appreciate a merry thought and a cheerful speech as much as anybody. I can laugh and I can enjoy good, clean, humorous remarks as well as most people. And having now served the Lord for nearly 40 years I bear my witness that I have never had to relinquish a single pleasure for which I have felt a deliberate desire. As soon as you are renewed in heart, you are changed in your pleasuresand that which might have been a pleasure to you, once, would then be a misery.

If I had to sit in some peoples company and hear what some people talk about, it would be Hell to me! One night, having to preach up in the North of England, this unfortunate circumstance occurred to me. When I got down to the railway, I was put into a first-class carriage with five racing gentlemen who were going to the Doncaster races. Happily they did not know me but from the beginning to the end the conversation of these gentlemen was garnished with expressions which tortured me. And at last they fell upon a subject which was unutterably loathsome. I pray God that I may not be condemned to dwell with such people forever, for it would be Hell to me!

Ladies and Gentlemen, you need not think that I rob myself of any pleasure when I do not go to racetrack, or associate with the licentious! It is my pleasure to keep far off from the pleasures of those men of pleasure, in whose company I was forced to spend that evening. The pleasures of this world are so full of dust, dirt and grit that he who has once washed his mouth clean of them, declines another meal of such bunk. You will lose no pleasure if you come to Christ!

V. I hear one other person say, I cannot come. Why not? Well, Sir, I do not mean that I shall not come one of these days, but IT WOULD NOT BE CONVENIENT JUST NOW. I could not yield my heart to the Lord tonight. No. I know. You have an engagement tomorrow which must be attended to and it would not be quite the thing for a Christian. Just so. It would not be convenient tonight, nor on Monday, nor will it be on Tuesday, depend upon ityour anxious thoughts will have gone by then.

It will not be convenient to be saved? You want to see a little life, do you not? Life in London means death. Oh, but just now I am only an apprentice! Then at once be bound apprentice to Christ! But I am a journeyman. When I get a little business of my own, then will be the time. Will it? Oh that you would become a journeyman to Christ! But I have associations just now that render it difficult. That is to say God must wait

your convenience. Is that the way the poor treat the doctors who receive patients gratis? Do they say, Doctor, it is not convenient for me to call upon you before 10 or 11 oclock in the morning. It is not convenient for me to come to your house. I shall be glad to see you if you come to my house about half-past 11 in the evening.

Would you send a message to a physician in the West End that you will be pleased for him to attend to you for nothing if he will come at your time? Oh, you say, I should not think of insulting a doctor like that, if he is kind enough to attend to me for nothing. And yet you will insult your God! You mean that God is not worthy of your strength and health nowbut when you are old and worn outthen you mean to sneak into Heaven and cheat the devil! It is dirt mean of you! I can say no better.

Though the Lord is exceedingly gracious and merciful, yet when men make up their minds to it that they will only give Him the worst end of lifeit is small wonder that they die in their sins! What must God think of such treatment? Do not say, I cannot come. Come at once. The Lord help you to come!   
VI. I have heard people say, I cannot come, Sir, for I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT. I am a poor man. I never had any education. What is it that you cannot understand? Can you not understand that you have broken Gods Law and that the just God must punish you for it? You can understand that! Can you not understand that if you trust the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is certain that He took your sin and bore it in His own body on the Cross and put your sin away, for His name is the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world?

Can you not understand that if you trust in Him you have Him to stand in your placefor the Scripture says, He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him? You can understand it if you wish to do so. There is nothing in the Gospel which the poorest and the least educated cannot understand if their minds are made willing to know and receive the Truth of God. If the Spirit of God will come upon them, they cannot only understand the Gospel, but grasp it and enjoy it and begin to teach it to others, toofor the Lord makes the babes to have knowledge and discretion in His ways while the wise and learned in scientific matters often miss the way to the eternal kingdom.

I have done. The sound of the bell tells me that my time has fled. Another bell will one day warn you that you have done and that your life is over, even as my sermon is over. But I need to say just this. If there is any man here who says, I cannot come, I beg him to express himself properly and speak out the sad fact as it ought to be spoken. Here is the style Unhappy wretch, I cannot come to Christ! Millions in Heaven have come but I cannot come! My mother died in a good hope, but, Mother, I cannot come. My father has gone home to be with Jesus but I cannot come.

I thank God that this statement is not true, but if you say it and believe it, you ought never to rest anymore, for if you cannot come to Christ you are the unhappiest person in the world! Is there any woman that cries, I cannot come, or any man that pleads, I cannot come? Wherever you are sitting or standing, let the bell that told out the death of the last hour warn you of your spiritual death! For if you cannot come to Christ and eat of His supper, you cannot be saved! You cannot escape from the wrath to comeyou are doomed forever!

May I ask you to do another thing? If you still intend to say, I cannot come, will you speak the truth now? Will you alter a word and get nearer the truth? Say, I will not come. I cannot come, is Greek, or double Dutchbut the plain English is, I WILL NOT COME. I wish you would say that rather than the other because the recoil of saying, I will not come; I will not believe in Jesus; I will not repent of sin; I will not turn from my wicked waysthe recoil, I say, from that might be blessed by God to you to make you see your desperate state. I wish you would then cry, I cannot sit down and make my own damnation sure by saying that I will not come to Christ.

Will you now, instead of refusing to come, resolve to come at once? Say, I will come to Jesus. Tell me how. You can only come to Christ by trusting Him. Trust yourself with Him and He will save you! Never did anyone trust Jesus in vain! Trust has a powerful influence over the Lord Jesus.

He comes to the rescue of a soul that leans wholly upon Him. He will do all things for youHe will change your nature as well as forgive your sin! And your nature being changed, you shall lead a new life from this time forth and grow in Divine Grace until you become like He in whom you trust!

And then He will take you to be forever with Him. Washed in the blood of the Lamb, you shall walk with Him in white amidst the glorified! Thus I have talked tonight in a very homely way. I pray the Lord to bless words which are intended to be faithful, plain and impressive. May we meet in Heaven! There are very many strangers here tonightmay you not be strangers to the Lord Jesus! Many of our friends are away and some of you have come out although it is a nasty wet eveningI take this as a token for good.

God bless you! I pray that you may get the double blessing and may remember this gloomy, dark, December-like evening in May by the blessing that God shall put upon you through Jesus Christ His Son. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 14.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK501, 560, 550.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:   
DEAR FRIENDSI hope this sermon may touch the consciences of the careless. It should be widely scattered if such is found to be the case. I have earnestly sought that it may be so by the power of the Holy Spirit. Please unite with me in this. I do not find myself quite recovered. We have wet weather and my old enemy tries me. I hope to shake it all off soon and to return to work in good condition but this may need a little longer delay. If this rest sets me going for all the remainder of this year it will be a very good investment. Remembering my readers in my prayers, I am your servant for Christs sake,

Mentone, Jan. 3, 1890. *C. H. SPURGEON*   
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MORE ROOM FOR MORE PEOPLE   
NO. 3529

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1916. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
It is done as you have commanded, and still there is room. Luke 14:22.

How delightful it is to observe that the wrath of man becomes tributary to the Glory of God! See an illustration in the parable of the marriage supper. Those persons who were first bid would not come. In order to do the good man of the house a despite, they declined his invitation, they refused to grace his board. Instead of causing his honor to be tarnished, they were, against their own will, the means of increasing his reputation! Had they come, it would only have been said that he made a great feast for his good friends. As they did not avail themselves of his hospitality, he brought in the beggars from the streets and swept the hedges and the byways to find the poorest of the poorto all of whom he gave a hearty welcome! So it became the common talk all over the land, and tens of thousands extolled the generosity of the host who had given such a sumptuous banquet to such strange guests. Let not the haughty, the arrogant, or the scornful of the children of men imagine that their paltry conceit can thwart Gods Covenant purpose or bring discredit on the riches of His mercy! Oh, Sinner, if you reject a Savior, it shall be your own loss, not His! If you live and die without faith in Christ, upon your own head the fearful recompense will fall! When the self-righteous reject Him, it only causes Jesus to say, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. When the rich men and the rulers refuse the Gospel, then, the poor have the Gospel preached to them. When the wise and prudent put it aside, then it is graciously revealed unto babes! Thus God is glorified, though the temper of men is ever so turbulent. Let us, my Brothers and Sisters, always be patient of heart when we see the rage of men awakened against the Gospel of Christ. They can do it no hurt! His purpose shall standHe will do all His pleasure. The bit is in their mouths, the hook is in their nostrils. Let them roar as they may, they cannot resist the force by which they are driven as chaff before the wind! He will surely perform His work and His name shall be glorious!

Not less delightful is it to observe how the anger of God, instead of venting itself in rashness, vindicates His goodness. In reading the parable to you just now, I noticed to you that because the man who made the feast was angry, he said, Go out quickly into the highways and hedges, and bring in the blind, and the crippled and the lame to the supper. So kindly disposed was he, that his very anger impelled him to an extraordinary deed of kindness! The Lord was angry with the Jews, and His Apostles turned to the Gentiles. The natural branches of the olive were put away in His wrathbut what then? Why, He took us who were of the wild olive and grafted us in who were heretofore wild and alien, so that even His anger towards Israel turned to the benefit of the Gentilesand we get reconciliation out of their rejection! May we not regard this as a rule of His government? When a congregation hears the Word and tramples it under foot, what marvel if God takes the candlestick out of the place in His anger? But does He break the candlestick? No, He moves it to another place! Others get the benefit of the Light which those despised had it aforetime. Great God of Wonders, we bless You that even when Your anger burns, Your mercy brightly shines. Amidst the thunder and the storm, soft showers are rained in silver drops to make glad the earth!

Our text tells us that the servant said, It is done as you have commanded, and still there is room.

I think I see here a satisfactory announcementIt is done as You have commanded. A remarkable statementstill there is room. And an implied consummationthat the room will eventually be filled. First, then   
I. A DESIRABLE ANNOUNCEMENT.   
He said, It is done as you have commanded. Those who serve God best, have generally the least to say about it. When I hear people boast of their religious attainments, I am apt to seriously suspect their deficiencies. A boastful Christian I knew something of, when talking to an earnest man, met with very curt replies. And pray said the one, have not you any Grace ? Yes, said the other, but I never had any to boast of. Disciples who are fullest of Divine Grace will be slowest to vaunt. Humility befits a servant. It is done, sounds better than, I have done as you have commanded. In like manner the man who gained five pounds in one of the parables did not come and say, Lord, I have gained five poundshe said, Your pound has gained five pounds That was the more delicate way to put itnot as an affectation of speech, but with a becoming modesty. So, too, with the Church of God, when she has done as Christ commands her, she will always feel desirous to wait upon Him as a humble servant, accounting this no more than her duty. Besides, the declaration appears to have been made in a waiting attitude, with an expectancy of having something more to do. It is done as you have commanded, and still there is room, so that the servant seems to stand ready to do something more to fill the vacant places at the feast. And thus we ought always to stand as Christians when we have done our bestwaiting for fresh directions, never saying, I have done enough, and now I can retire from service. Rather let God be thanked for what we have been enabled to do, but, strengthened and encouraged by success, let us resolve to do more and entreat Him to show us what still remains to be done, and what more we can have the pleasure of doing! Oh, my Lord, I have grown gray in Your service! Fulfill to me Your promise, You shall bring forth fruit in old age to show that the Lord is upright. Do not put me away from your loved employ. Honor me with some other task. Delight my willing soul with some fresh command. Bid me do or suffer your will, but pass me not by, leave me not to be a laggard, not honored and uninterested in fulfilling my Lords requests. So let the Church of God always feel that she has never come to the place where she can say, Rest and be thankful. Higher, higher, higher, higher, must still be her motto! If her missions have conquered one continent, they must invade another! If half the world has been converted, there would be no rest to us till the other half were converted likewise. It is done as You have commanded, and still there is roomroom for more work, because there is room for more guests at Your feast.   
Did I not say that this was a desirable announcement? I am afraid these servants said what we would, some of us, hesitate to affirm. It is done as You have commanded. Alas, how few churches could say this! And where the church might collectively affirm it, many members of the church would shrink from professing individually to have done as the host commanded! For what was that your Lord enjoined? Go out quickly. How little there has been of going out after sinners! We have been content to preach to those who came to hear us! Of course, if the people will come to hear us in such numbers, and throng this Tabernacle so constantly, we have no reason to go away from them. But, alas, there are places of worship which I could indicate without difficulty that are not filled, that never were filled, that never will be filled, where there are, probably, as many spiders as there are persons under ordinary circumstance where there are certainly more pews than sitters! And yet it does not seem to have ever occurred to the preacher that he should go out after the people! Small congregations will continue to worship in places not one-fourth occupied, when they might go across to the theater or the music hall, or to some other large building into which the people might come, and where they might be met with! It would be a strange thing for the supply of fish, if our fishermen only sat at the window and caught what came beneath itbut never went forth to sea after the fish! There would be little game, I guarantee you, upon his lordships table if he sat at the drawing room window to shoot only that which came there to be shot! But it does not come that way. The moors must be trod and the covers must be beaten! So if we are to have many sinners saved, we must go out of our own quiet haunts and go forth into frequented places. We must preach in the street, or at the market, or on the village green! We must take the Word to the people, if they will not come to the Word. Go out, go out, says the Savior. This is a word that should ring loudly in the ears of many Christians. You have almost heard enough sermonsgo out and teach yourself! While you have been eating the fat and drinking the sweet, multitudes are perishing for lack of the heavenly bread. Go out and break it to them! Oh, that there might come a holy impulse upon many here present to begin some good work for Christ! Break up some soil up to now uncultivated! Make an eruption and an invasion into Satans territory! There is no land that yields so well as that which is newly broken up. The virgin soil that has long been given up to the forest, the brier and the thornlet but the plow go through this and there shall be sevenfold harvests! No preaching is half as successful as that which carries the Gospel to the dissolute classesthose who have never been hardened by hearing and rejecting the tidings of mercythose who, albeit they may have their faces stained with immorality, certainly have not any affectation in their manner! To these it comes like a new thingit strikes them as sweet music and, hearing the joyful sound, they full often turn to God and live! To this day is it true, as our Savior said in His day, that publicans and harlots enter into the Kingdom of Heaven before Pharisees! This is a sphere of labor that remunerates the laborer. The lowest of the low, when hearing the Word, often accept what the so-called respectable despise. Go out, therefore, go out!   
Know this, likewise, that the matter is urgent, for the Master said, go out quickly. Here, again, I am afraid we cannot say we have done this. Go out quicklygo out in haste, go out with the utmost speedgo out as one who runs on an errand, anxious to fulfill his mission! Go out, not listlessly, as if you had to wait for an opportunity, but eagerly, knowing that this is the opportune time! Hurry yourself to have it done at once. Go out quickly. The world goes by steam, nowadays, while the Church still jogs on by the broad-wheeled wagon! I know some churches that crawl like a snail upon a small leaf, making much ado to accomplish nothing! If half a dozen converts are added in 12 months, they think it is rather too many to be safe, and they are half afraid that they cannot be all genuine Christians! They would gladly summer them and winter them, as they say, and try them in half a dozen modes. In fact, it seems to them as if God never sent a new-born convert into their church except for them to worry itnot for them to accept it as a blessing from Heaven and to train it, and nurse itbut to worry it! This will never do! We are to look after something more rapidly than the progress which these churches will ever make. Go out quickly! Men are dying. There is no time for us to be quibbling among ourselves! It behooves us to show our zeal rather than waste our energies. Men are perishing! We must preach the Gospel to them nowtell them that it is now or never with some of themmake known to them a present Savior, and cry to them, If God is God, serve Him! If Baal is God, serve him! How long will you decide between two opinions, for the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you will hear His voice? There needs to be promptness, quickness, speed, eagerness after souls in the preachers of the Gospel. Go out quickly.   
And have we not failed in another point? Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the blind, and the crippled, and the maimed, and compel them to come in. There are certain missions now established for which we have reason to bless God greatly. There are works going on in London which are to the glory of Christendom. God speed them all! Such beloved friends as Miss MacPherson, Dr. Bernardo, our brother Orsman and many others deserve our love and esteem, for they have given themselves up to work among the poorest of the poor and the lowest of the low, bearing a great deal which some of us might shrink from, rejoicing to show their diligence among a people much neglectedand reaping a good harvest of comfort to themselves in the salvation of souls! But, dear Friends, where there is one of such works, there ought to be 50and with this population of London, verging now upon four millions, when we have added all these works of faith and labors of love together, we might well say of them, What are they among so many? May God touch many of your hearts, my Brothers and Sisters, and make you feel the soft touch of sympathy for the perishing, while you hear the Masters words spoken to you, Go out yourselves quickly, and lay hold on the blind, and the crippled, and the maimed and bring them in to the supper Yes, bring them to Jesus! You cannot do it of yourself, but His Spirit dwells in you. Do not forget that! You are not an ordinary man. You are not an ordinary woman. Know you not that your bodies are the Temples of the Holy Spirit? God dwells in you! And with God in you, what can you not do? Have but faith in the indwelling Deity and attempt difficultiesno, attempt what some think impossibilities and you shall find that with God all things are possible! Weak as you are, yet, through His strength, you shall perform all things! I pray God for this Church, that she may not be found guilty at the coming of Christ of not having gone out after the poor. Encourage them to come to this house at all times, whenever you can. I do not know where we are to put any more, but there is Thursday evening, and there is Monday evening, and there is room then. Oh, bring in whomever you can, for perhaps when the Gospel is preached, God may bless it to them. Let us not be deficient in this. In the next place we proposed to draw your attention to

II. A REMARKABLE STATEMENT.   
They had fished up all the poor people in the city and they had brought in the four charactersthe poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blindand after that it was alleged still there is room.   
Well, well, that is a very encouraging piece of information for ungodly people here! For those who have not come to Jesus, this is welcome information! Still there is room. Now we know there is still room for sinners, from several considerations.   
We may infer it, to begin with, from the Doctrine of Election. God has chosen unto Himself a people. We are told that their number is a number that no man can number. Well now, those who are saved are not so very many. They are a great many more than some bigots would like to believe, but they are a great many fewer than some enthusiasts would imagine! I am sure God has not yet saved enough to accomplish the number that He has proposed to save, by a very long way. It is my own belief, as it is my earnest hope, that in all things Christ will have the preeminence. As in other things, so also in this, He will have more souls than Satan, that He may have the preeminence over the old serpent. It does not look to me that there should likely be at the last, more lost than saved. We cannot answer the question to a certainty, but surely the Lords mercy will triumph over human sin and God will get to Himself the victory! A good Divine used to say that he hoped and thought that, at the last, there would be no more persons lost, in proportion, than there might be found of persons in prison, in any well-ordered State, in proportion to the number of those who were citizens at large. I only trust it may be so. But the lines of Gods election do not encompass a mere handful. There is a great and vast number chosen by Himand there is no such great and vast number gathered in yet. Therefore, we are persuaded that there is still room.   
Next, the efficacy of the Atonement leads us to believe this. The Atonement that Christ offered on the Cross was no small matter. It was the sacrifice of Himself as an Infinite Beingas God and as Manand I dare set no limit to it in its efficacy, itself considered. The death of so august a Person, in circumstances of such dishonor, amid agonies so inconceivable, must have about it an amount of virtue utterly beyond all reckoning! Jesus Christ is to see of the travail of His soul and to be satisfiedand the travail of His soul does not mean the few Christian people that are now in the world or have beenand His satisfaction will not be consummated by the few millions that have up to now been saved. Why, it does not satisfy us yet, and our hearts are narrow compared with His! He will not be satisfied unless myriads are His. The jewels of His crown must be countless as the stars of Heaven by night, and as the sands upon the seashore by day! By that bottomless, fathomless Atonement, I believe that there still is and must be, room   
*Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood   
Shall never Lose its power,   
Till all the ransomed Church of God   
Is saved to sin no more.*   
The end has not been reached! The virtue of the blood has not been stayed. The ransomed Church has not been all gathered in. So there is still room!   
Again, when I consider the greatness of the adorable Persons who entered into Covenant to devise the wondrous plan and accomplish the mighty work of salvation, I feel persuaded that there is still room. Who is it that saves me? It is God who made Heaven and earth! He devised the magnificent purpose according to the good counsel of His will. Do you think that the Architect of yonder heavens has designed a little Church for the display of His Glory? Do you think that He who spread the stars abroad in all their countless hosts to adorn His universe has limited the number, with causeless thrift, of brilliant diadems who shall celebrate the everlasting song of His praise? We think not! It was Jesus who worked salvation and do you think that such a Savior, of such unrivalled dignity, came to effect a petty salvation for a petty few whom you might count upon your fingers? Incredible! Impossible! God forbid! And what shall I say of the Holy Spirit, whose majesty awes us, whose mystery baffles us, whose mercy enlivens usthe Spirit of God who works in us that salvation which the Christ of God has worked for usdo you think that He has come to dwell on earth with any small or insignificant intent? What small sect will contribute to His satisfaction? No, Glory be to His name, He brought three thousand in on the Pentecostal day, and He will yet cause nations to be born in a day, and the Church shall cry, Who has begotten me these? Thesefrom where did they come? If I go to Gethsemane and see the bloody sweat, I expect a wondrous harvest from that matchless sowing! If I stand on Calvary and mark the flowing wounds, I expect a marvelous reward for those tremendous griefs! If we are not to be pitifully disappointed, there must be something greater yet in reserve than the world has ever seen! The history of Christendom is far more grand than any chapter that has yet been written. There is room! There must be room for the feast of mercymuch room still to be occupied! It is not yet half filled! Scant at present is the array of guests, compared with the complement of those who must be brought in!   
Still there is room. With a mysterious spiritual consciousness, with an eager, sympathetic anxiety, the Church feels and knows that there is room. The individual yearnings of our Lords disciples attest it. Do I not myself daily feel as if there were roomplaces that need peopling, as well as people that needed placing at the feast? Brothers, our Churches prove that the fresh converts introduced into their fellowship are like fresh blood poured into their veins. A Church cannot long be happy and healthy without recruiting, renewing, revivingand we are always needing fresh workers with the dew of the morning upon their souls! We are needing preachers powerfully impressed with their own call to proclaim the Gospel. Many pulpits need them! We need Evangelistsmen who have just welcomed the news, the good news, the heavenly tidings, and hasten to tell it at the corners of the streets, to the passengers along our thoroughfares! Lovers of souls, seekers of souls, oh, how much we need them! Many a Sunday school needs teachers. Many a Ragged School needs self-denying assistants! Everywhere there is a needa real need for more helpers in the Church, for more laborers in the harvest! So there must be room to store the fruits they need to reap!   
As the benches of the feast seem to groan for guests, so does the Church long after fresh access to her community. Were you here sometimes at the Monday night Prayer Meeting, you would feel there was room! Some of our Brethren pray as if they had room in their hearts for hundreds and thousands that must be reclaimed! When the Church gets into the spirit of prayer, her cries and groans give proof of secret tears and private wrestling. Her earnest members, by the instant entreaties made to God, prove that the Church feels that the guest chamber is not yet full. Her tent is not filled with childrenshe is crying out, like Rachel of oldGive me children or I die. She needs to see her converts multiplied, she longs to stretch forth the curtains of her habitations. There is there must be room! Judging by my own experience, I say that the minister can generally feel when God is saving the souls of his hearers. The efforts and anxieties of his labor are accompanied with such pangs and throes within his own soul that he is well content with the pain and travail for the joy he has in prospect! When last week I had some conversation with the candidates for Church fellowship, my heart rejoiced as I found out how many of you had lately found the Savior. After being halfdubious whether a blessing had attended the sermons I recently preached, as I listened to the stories of conversion that so many told me, it made my heart leap for joy! The fact was no tidings had come to me of the expectations I had fostered. There is an interval between the sowing time and the reaping time. But I am encouraged. No doubt there are more of you coming. All but decided now, you will be altogether decided soon. God is at work with youHe means to bring you in, that His Grace may have honor. Well, those desires and prayers, those longings and hopes, those wishes and expectations of the Church all show that she does not feel thorough satisfaction with present resultsand certainly she feels no misgiving as to the accommodation ready for all comers.  
Still there is room. Yes, God be praised, there is! That mother says, Ah, that my child were brought in! Blessed be God, there is room for him! And the father says, Oh, that my sons were saved! Well, there is room for them! There have been thousands who have gone to Heaven of late, but still there is room! There are thousands who have come to Christ of late, but still there is room! Prophets, Apostles, martyrs, confessors, saints have gone into Glory, but still there is room! In this Church hundreds have pressed in to know the Lord, but still there is room! There is room! There is room! And there is room for you! Blessed be God for that! Oh, that you may occupy that room! My third point is this, that there is implied in the text   
III. A MOST BLESSED CONSUMMATION that the room will be filled.   
It is an old saying of the natural philosopher that nature abhors a vacuum. It is true, I doubt not. But here is another axiomGrace abhors a vacuum. The good man of the house could not bear to see a vacant seat at his table. All things were ready, but there were empty places and he did not like it. The glory of the feast is to be found not merely in the provisions, but in the guests, so he must have the chairs occupied as well as the table covered. With reverence let it be said, the Glory of Christ lies not only in His Sacrifice, but in the sinners that that Sacrifice saves! A king is no king who has not any subjects. A head is no head if it has not a body. And so Jesus Christ would be a King without subjects if there were none saved. He would be a Head without membersand that is a ghastly thought! He must have a people and, what is more, He must have all His people. In our natural bodies, if but a little finger is missing, the body is not perfect. So also in Christif all His members are not saved, there would not be a perfect Christ! The Apostle tells us that the Church is the fullness of Christ. Hence if a part of the Church were lost, a part of Christs fullness would be lost. Therefore He must cause all to come in the unity of the faith unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, for Grace abhors a vacuum! When at last the end shall come, and the dispensation of Grace shall be wound up, it will be seen that at the Table of Mercy here below, there was not a seat left empty! All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me. Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. And whom He did predestinate, them He also called. So it shall be. Satan shall not be able to point to a single empty place and say, There should a certain soul have been seated. God appointed it, but I frustrated His purpose! That cannot, shall not be! The wedding must and shall be furnished with guests!

In like manner the Table of Glory, like the Table of Grace, while the board is richly spread, the seats shall be amply filled. There at that Table, blessed be God, there is a place for me, and none of you can occupy it. It will be only occupied by him for whom it was designed. If you believe in Christ, dear Friend, there is a place for you, a freehold, a vested right of which you cannot be deprived! There is a crown that will fit no other head than yours. There is a harp that will yield music to no other hands than yours. There is a mansion among the many, many mansions in our Fathers House for your residence. There will be no mansions in Heaven at last untenanted. In some streets of London, To let is written on half the houses. Cheerless is the lookout. But when at last the King shall bring His children Home, there will not be one prepared mansion that has lost its prepared tenant! The reserved inheritance shall revert to the reserved peoplethe purchased inheritance shall inherit the purchased possession! This gives me hope in preaching! It convinces me that I do not preach in vain. There must and there shall be some saved. God has declared it! God has made ready for it on earth and He has made ready in Heaven for it. Therefore, they shall be brought in! His preparation shall not be in vain. His wedding shall be furnished with guests. This certainty fortifies me against an apparent contingency. It inspires me with hope about some of you, my dear Hearers, who look hesitant, that you, before long, will be resolute. If you come to God, there are preparations made to receive, to welcome you, to lodge you, to feed you, to supply all your needs. Do you desire to come? You shall not be cast away. Why should not you wear one of these crowns? Why should not you tenant one of those mansions? Still there is room.   
But who will help to fill that room? Who out of this dense throng of people will help to fill the vacant places at the Gospel Supper? I cannot call you one by one, as I would like to, but I do call to you with all my heart, Come to Jesus! Should you say, How shall I come? Well, it is not a motion of the bodyit is a motion of the mind. What sort of motion of the mind? do you ask. It is trusttrustsimple conviction and unquestioning faith! If you commit your case to Him, He will be concerned for you. Follow Christyou shall have fellowship with Him. Your resolution will be evidence of your Redemption! Your plea will procure a sense of His pardon! By your acquiescence you will learn that you are accepted in the Beloved. May God incline you, by the mighty operation of His Spirit, to come to Jesus! So shall my prayers be answered! So shall your souls be blessed forever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 8:41-56.**

Verses 41, 42. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus feet, and besought Him that He would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay dying. But as He went the people thronged Him. Notice the word, behold, for this was a wonder that a man so high in position to come to Christ at all, especially one who was in an ecclesiastical position, for he was a ruler of the synagogue. Usually those who had to do with the synagogue were great despisers of our Lord Jesus! God works great wonders, however, and sometimes the camel does go through the eye of the needle! This mans name was Jairus, a common Jewish name, and you will find it was the name of one of the judges recorded in the Book of Judges. Note this mans humility, He fell down at Jesus feet. The greatest of men must humble themselves before they can obtain mercy. Jesus Christ is always ready to receive, to accept and bless all those who fall down at His feet, but those who lift up themselves shall find Him to be their sure and swift enemy and the day shall come when He shall abase them to the dust. He besought Him that He would come into his house, for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay dying. She seems to have been not only the darling of the house, but of all the neighbors, too, for we find that all the neighbors came together to weep and to lament her. You find Matthew says that this daughter was already dead. It seems that some delay arose, so that the child died, but the father, with triumphant faith, still besought Him to come and raise her, even from the very jaws of death.

43, 44. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind Him and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stopped. This disease laughs at the physicians, and whenever a cure has been effected it has always been a slow one. Hence the supernatural character of this cure, Immediately her issue of blood stopped. This is the glory of our blessed religion, that it heals sin-sick souls at once and upon the spot! The moment a man believes in Jesus, his nature is changed! He becomes a new creaturein that moment all his sins are gone! In that same hour he becomes heir of God, and jointheir with Christ. Immediately.

45. And Jesus said, Who touched Me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng You and press You, and do You ask, Who touched Me? What impudence on their part! Doubtless there are many things we say of our Lord, and even to Him in prayer, that are very far from such words as He should have from His disciples. There were many who touched Him out of curiosity, and doubtless some out of lack of respect to His Person came too close to Him, but there was only one who touched Him with the finger of faith, which was the only true touch!

46-48. And Jesus said, Somebody has touched Me, for I perceive that virtue has gone out of Me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling and, falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: your faith has made you whole; go in peace. Faith crowns Christ and, therefore, Christ takes the crown off His own head and puts it upon the head of faith. Your faith has saved you. Christs virtue would not have saved her without her faithand certainly her faith could not have saved her without Christs virtue! We ought to note how vital faith is to true salvation, and what a high degree of importance is attached to it. Let us, therefore, if we have some degree of faith, pray for more, Lord, increase our faith, for if a little of it may heal, what may not a great faith do?

49. While He yet spoke, there came one from the ruler of the synagogues house, saying to him, Your daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. Be resigned, and say, The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, and expect not the blessing back again. Do as David did, who, while the child was yet alive, fasted and prayed, saying, Perhaps God will spare him, but when he was dead, fasted no more. Your daughter is deadtrouble not the Master. Ah, but this man knew that He who can stay the soul at the gates of death can also bring it back from the gates of death if He wills. He that can get it from the paw of the lion can get it from the jaw of the bear! He can deliver His people at all times and at all seasons, and even Death is a conquered foe!

50. But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. Believe only. What a depth lies in those two words! Believe only! Ah, Lord, it ought to be the easiest thing in the world to believe You, for You are so truthful! You keep every promise to us, and yet sometimes when we are in the dark, and when circumstances go contrary to us, it is hard to believebut is it not the hardness in our own hearts? Believe only! Christian, what is your trouble this morning, what is your trial? Believe only, and let your humble faith cast your burdens upon your God! Believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51, 52. And when He came into the house, He allowed no man to go in except Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleeps. They were so sure she was dead that they had actually hired the minstrels for her funeralso Mark tells usand the pipers and the women that made those strange, Oriental lamentations were there, ready to bury her.

53, 54. And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And He put them out, and took her by the hand, and called saying, Little girl, arise. But Christ put them all out. They laughed Him to scorn and, therefore, He would not work the miracle in their presence. It is not meet to cast pearls before swine!

55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and He commanded to give her food. Do note here the word, straightway. Just now we had the word, immediately, and now we have, straightway. It is one of the distinguishing features of the Gospel, both of Mark and of Luke, that both Evangelists use the word eutheos, straightway. Christs miracles do not take a long time to dothey are done straightway! If there is a distressed soul here, now, your salvation need not take months and yearsit may be done today, and in a moment you may be able to rejoice that your sins are forgiven, and that you are a child of God! She arose straightway, and He commanded to give her food. There are no unnecessary miracles. It needed a miracle to give her life, but food could sustain it and, therefore, there is no further miracle performed.

56. And her parents were astonished: but He charged them that they should tell no man what was done. But we know from another Evangelist that the same thereof went abroad everywhere and, indeed, the healing of a soul is not a thing to be kept secretbut when any are raised from the dead the world must know it!

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 #227 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

COMPEL THEM TO COME IN   
NO. 227

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 5, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**Compel them to come in. Luke 14:23.**

I FEEL in such a haste to go out and obey this commandment this morning, by compelling those to come in who are now tarrying in the highways and hedges, that I cannot wait for an introduction, but must at once set about my business.

Hear then, O you that are strangers to the Truth of God as it is in Jesushear then the message that I have to bring you. You have fallen, fallen in your father Adam. You have fallen also in yourselves, by your daily sin and your constant iniquity. You have provoked the anger of the Most High. And as assuredly as you have sinned, so certainly must God punish you if you persevere in your iniquity, for the Lord is a God of justice and will by no means spare the guilty. But have you not heard, has it not long been spoken in your ears, that God, in His infinite mercy, has devised a way whereby, without any infringement upon His honor, He can have mercy upon you, the guilty and the undeserving? To you I speak. And my voice is unto you, O sons of men. Jesus Christ, very God of very God, has descended from Heaven and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Begotten of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived in this world a life of exemplary holiness and of the deepest suffering, till at last He gave Himself up to die for our sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

And now the plan of salvation is simply declared unto youWhosoever believe in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. For you who have violated all the precepts of God and have disdained His mercy and dared His vengeance, there is yet mercy proclaimed, for whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. For this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Whosoever comes unto Him He will in no wise cast out, for He is able also to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Now all that God asks of youand this He gives youis that you will simply look at His bleeding, dying Son and trust your souls in the hands of Him whose name alone can save from death and Hell. Is it not a marvelous thing that the proclamation of this Gospel does not receive the unanimous consent of men? One would think that as soon as ever this

was preached, That whosoever believes shall have eternal life, everyone of you, casting away every man his sins and his iniquities, would lay hold on Jesus Christ and look alone to His Cross. But alas, such is the desperate evil of our nature, such the pernicious depravity of our character that this message is despisedthe invitation to the Gospel feast is rejectedand there are many of you who are this day enemies of God by wicked works. You are enemies to the God who preaches Christ to you today, enemies to Him who sent His Son to give His life a ransom for many.

Strange, I say, it is that it should be so, yet nevertheless it is the fact and hence the necessity for the command of the textCompel them to come in. Children of God, you who have believed, I shall have little or nothing to say to you this morning. I am going straight to my businessI am going after those that will not comethose that are in the byways and hedges and God going with me, it is my duty now to fulfill this command, Compel them to come in.

First, I must, find you out. Secondly, I will go to work to compel you to come in.   
I. First, I must FIND YOU OUT. If you read the verses that precede the text, you will find an amplification of this commandGo out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind. And then, afterwards, Go out into the highways, bring in the vagrants, the highwaymen, and into the hedges, bring in those that have no resting place for their heads and are lying under the hedges to rest, bring them in also and compel them to come in. Yes, I see you this morning, you that are poor. I am to compel you to come in. You are poor in circumstances, but this is no barrier to the kingdom of Heaven, for God has not exempted from His Grace the man that shivers in rags and who is destitute of bread. In fact, if there is any distinction made, the distinction is on your side and for your benefitUnto you is the word of salvation sent. For the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.   
But especially I must speak to you who are poor spiritually. You have no faith, you have no virtue, you have no good work, you have no grace and what is worse still, you have no hope. Ah, my Master has sent you a gracious invitation. Come and welcome to the marriage feast of His love. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely. Come, I must lay hold upon you, though you are defiled with the foulest filth and though you have nothing but rags upon your back. Though your own righteousness has become as filthy clouts, yet must I lay hold upon you and invite you, first, and even compel you to come in.   
And now I see you again. You are not only poor, but you are maimed. There was a time when you thought you could work out your own salvation without Gods help, when you could perform good works, attend to ceremonies and get to Heaven by yourselves. But now you are maimed, the sword of the Law has cut off your hands and now you can work no longer. You say, with bitter sorrow   
*The best performance of my hands,  
Dares not appear before Your Throne.*   
You have lost all power now to obey the Law. You feel that when you would do good, evil is present with you. You are maimed. You have given up, as a forlorn hope, all attempt to save yourself, because you are maimed and your arms are gone. But you are worse off than that, for if you could not work your way to Heaven, you could walk your way there along the road by faith.   
But you are maimed in the feet as well as in the hands. You feel that you cannot believe, that you cannot repent, that you cannot obey the stipulations of the Gospel. You feel that you are utterly undone, powerless in every respect to do anything that can be pleasing to God. In fact, you are crying out   
*Oh, could I but believe,   
Then all would easy be,   
I would, but cannot, Lord relieve,   
My help must come from You.*   
To you am I sent also. Before you am I to lift up the blood-stained banner of the Cross. To you am I to preach this Gospel, Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And unto you am I to cry, Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.   
There is yet another class. You are undecided. You are wavering between two opinions. You are sometimes seriously inclined and at another time worldly gaiety calls you away. What little progress you make in religion is but a limp. You have a little strength, but that is so little that you make but painful progress. Ah, limping brother, to you also is the word of this salvation sent. Though you halt between two opinions, the Master sends me to you with this messageHow long halt you between two opinions? If God is God, serve Him. If Baal is God, serve him. Consider your waysset your house in order, for you shall die and not live. Because I will do this, prepare to meet your God, O Israel! Halt no longer, but decide for God and His Truth.   
And yet I see another classthe blind. Yes, you that cannot see yourselvesthat think yourselves good when you are full of evil, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness. To you am I sent. You, blind souls that cannot see your lost estate, that do not believe that sin is so exceedingly sinful as it is and who will not be persuaded to think that God is a just and righteous Godto you am I sent. To you, too, that cannot see the Savior, that see no beauty in Him that you should desire Him. To you who see no excellence in virtue, no glories in religion, no happiness in serving God, no delight in being His children. To you, also, am I sent. Yes, to whom am I not sent if I take my text? For it goes further than thisit not only gives a particular description, so that each individual case may be met, but afterwards it makes a general sweep and says, Go into the highways and hedges.   
Here we bring in all ranks and conditions of menmy lord upon his horse in the highway and the woman trudging about her business. The thief waylaying the travelerall these are in the highway and they are all to be compelled to come in. And there in the hedgesthere lie some poor souls whose refuges of lies are swept awayand who are seeking to find some little shelter for their weary heads. To you, also, are we sent this morning. This is the universal commandcompel them to come in.   
Now, I pause after having described the character. I pause to look at the Herculean labor that lies before me. Well did Melancthon say, Old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon. As well might a little child seek to compel a Samson, as I seek to lead a sinner to the Cross of Christ. And yet my Master sends me about the errand. Lo, I see the great mountain before me of human depravity and stolid indifference, but by faith I cry, Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. Does my Master say, compel them to come in? Then, though the sinner is like Samson and I a child, I shall lead him with a thread. If God said do it, if I attempt it in faith it shall be done. And if with a groaning, struggling and weeping heart, I so seek this day to compel sinners to come to Christ, the sweet compulsions of the Holy Spirit shall go with every word and some, indeed, shall be compelled to come in.  
II. And now to the workdirectly to the work. Unconverted, unreconciled, unregenerate men and women, I am to COMPEL YOU TO COME IN. Permit me first of all to accost you in the highways of sin and tell you over again my errand. The King of Heaven this morning sends a gracious invitation to you. He says, As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live. Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool. Though they are red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow. Dear Brothers and Sisters, it makes my heart rejoice to think that I should have such good news to tell you and yet I confess my soul is heavy because I see you do not think it good newsbut turn away from it and do not give it due regard.

Permit me to tell you what the King has done for you. He knew your guilt, He foresaw that you would ruin yourself. He knew that His justice would demand your blood and in order that this difficulty might be escapedthat His justice might have its full due and that you might yet be savedJesus Christ has died. Will you, just for a moment, glance at this picture? You see that man there on His knees in the garden of Gethsemane, sweating drops of blood? You see this nextyou see that miserable Sufferer tied to a pillar and lashed with terrible scourges, till the shoulder bones are seen like white islands in the midst of a sea of blood? Again look at this third picture. It is the same Man hanging on the Cross with hands extended and with feet nailed fast, dying, groaning, bleeding. I thought the picture spoke and said, It is finished. Now all this has Jesus Christ of Nazareth done, in order that God might consistently with His justice pardon sin. And the message to you this morning is thisBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. That is trust Him, renounce your works and your ways and set your heart alone on this Man, who gave Himself for sinners.   
Well Brothers and Sisters, I have told you the message, what do you say? Do you turn away? You tell me it is nothing to you. You cannot listen to ityou will hear me by-and-by. But you will go your way this day and attend to your farm and merchandize. Stop, Brothers and Sisters, I was not told merely to tell you and then go about my business. No. I am told to compel you to come in. And permit me to observe to you before I further go, that there is one thing I can sayand to which God is my witness this morningthat I am in earnest with you in my desire that you should comply with this command of God. You may despise your own salvation, but I do not despise it. You may go away and forget what you shall hear, but you will please to remember that the things I now say cost me many a groan before I came here to utter them. My inmost soul is speaking out to you, my poor Brothers and Sisters, when I beseech you by Him that lives and was dead and is alive for evermore. Consider my Masters message which he bids me now address to you.   
But do you spurn it? Do you still refuse it? Then I must change my tone a minute. I will not merely tell you the message and invite you as I do with all earnestness and sincere affectionI will go further. Sinner, in Gods name I command you to repent and believe. Do you ask me from where is my authority? I am an ambassador of Heaven. My credentials some of them secret and in my own heart. And others of them open before you this day in the seals of my ministry, sitting and standing in this hall, where God has given me many souls for my hire. As God the everlasting One has given me a commission to preach His Gospel, I command you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not on my own authority, but on the authority of Him who said, Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. And then annexed this solemn sanction, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.   
Reject my message and remember, He that despised Moses Law, died without mercy under two or three witnessesof how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God. An ambassador is not to stand below the man with whom he deals, for we stand higher. If the minister chooses to take his proper rank, girded with the omnipotence of God and anointed with his holy unction, he is to command men and speak with all authority compelling them to come incommand, exhort, rebuke with all longsuffering.   
But do you turn away and say you will not be commanded? Then again will I change my note. If that avails not, all other means shall be tried. My Brothers and Sisters, I come to you simple of speech and I exhort you to flee to Christ. O my Brothers and Sisters, do you know what a loving Christ He is? Let me tell you from my own soul what I know of Him. I, too, once despised Him. He knocked at the door of my heart and I refused to open it. He came to me, times without number, morning by morning and night by night. He checked me in my conscience and spoke to me by His Spirit and when, at last, the thunders of the Law prevailed in my conscience, I thought that Christ was cruel and unkind.   
O I can never forgive myself that I should have thought so ill of Him! But what a loving reception did I have when I went to Him. I thought He would smite me, but His hand was not clenched in anger but opened wide in mercy. I thought full sure that His eyes would dart lightning flashes of wrath upon me. But, instead, they were full of tears. He fell upon my neck and kissed me. He took off my rags and did clothe me with His righteousness and caused my soul to sing aloud for joywhile in the house of my heart and in the house of His Church there was music and dancing because His son that He had lost was found and he that was dead was made alive. I exhort you, then, to look to Jesus Christ and to be lightened.   
Sinner, you will never regret itI will be bondsman for my Master that you will never regret ityou will have no sigh to go back to your state of condemnation. You shall go out of Egypt and shall go into the promised land and shall find it flowing with milk and honey. The trials of Christian life you shall find heavy, but you will be given Grace to make them light. And as for the joys and delights of being a child of God, if I lie this day you shall charge me with it in days to come. If you will taste and see that the Lord is good, I am not afraid but that you shall find that He is not only good, but better than human lips ever can describe. I know not what arguments to use with you. I appeal to your own self-interests. Oh my poor Friend, would it not be better for you to be reconciled to the God of Heaven, than to be His enemy? What are you getting by opposing God? Are you the happier for being His enemy?   
Answer, pleasure seeker; have you found delights in that cup? Answer me, self-righteous manhave you found rest for the soles of your feet in all your works? Oh you that go about to establish your own righteousness, I charge you let conscience speak. Have you found it to be a happy path? Ah, my Friend, Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which satisfies not. Hearken diligently unto Me and eat that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness. I exhort you by everything that is sacred and solemn, everything that is important and eternal, flee for your lives! Look not behind you, stay not in all the plain, stay not until you have proved and found an interest in the blood of Jesus Christthat blood which cleans us from all sin.   
Are you still cold and indifferent? Will not the blind man permit me to lead him to the feast? Will not my maimed Brother put his hand upon my shoulder and permit me to assist him to the banquet? Will not the poor man allow me to walk side-by-side with him? Must I use some stronger words? Must I use some other compulsion to compel you to come in? Sinners, this one thing I am resolved upon this morningif you are not saved you shall be without excuse. You, from the gray-headed down to the tender age of childhoodif you this day lay not hold on Christ, your blood shall be on your own head. If there is power in man to bring his fellow, (as there is when man is helped by the Holy Spirit) that power shall be exercised this morning, God helping me.   
Come, I am not to be put off by your rebuffs. If my exhortation fails, I must come to something else. My Brothers and Sisters, I entreat you, I entreat you stop and consider. Do you know what it is you are rejecting this morning? You are rejecting Christ, your only Savior. Other foundation can no man lay. There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. My Brothers and Sisters, I cannot bear that you should do this, for I remember what you are forgettingthe day is coming when you will want a Savior. It is not long before weary months shall have ended and your strength begins to decline. Your pulse shall fail you, your strength shall depart and you and the grim monsterDEATH must face each other. What will you do in the swellings of Jordan without a Savior? Deathbeds are stony things without the Lord Jesus Christ.   
It is an awful thing to die anyhow. He that has the best hope and the most triumphant faith finds that death is not a thing to laugh at. It is a terrible thing to pass from the seen to the unseen, from the mortal to the immortal, from time to eternity. And you will find it hard to go through the iron gates of death without the sweet wings of angels to conduct you to the portals of the skies. It will be a hard thing to die without Christ. I cannot help thinking of you. I see you acting the suicide this morning and I picture myself standing at your bedside and hearing your cries and knowing that you are dying without hope. I cannot bear that. I think I am standing by your coffin now and looking into your clay-cold face and saying, This man despised Christ and neglected the great salvation. I think what bitter tears I shall weep then, if I think that I have been unfaithful to you and how those eyes fast closed in death, shall seem to chide me and say, Minister, I attended the Music Hall, but you were not in earnest with me. You amused me, you preached to me, but you did not plead with me. You did not know what Paul meant when he said, As though God did beseech you by us we pray you in Christs stead, be you reconciled to God. I entreat you let this message enter your heart for another reason. I picture myself standing at the bar of God. As the Lord lives, the day of judgment is coming. You believe that? You are not an infidel. Your conscience would not permit you to doubt the Scripture. Perhaps you may have pretended to do so, but you cannot. You feel there must be a day when God shall judge the world in righteousness. I see you standing in the midst of that throng and the eye of God is fixed on

you. It seems to you that He is not looking anywhere else, but only upon you and He summons you before Him. And He reads your sins and He cries, Depart you cursed into everlasting fire in Hell!   
My Hearer, I cannot bear to think of you in that position. It seems as if every hair on my head must stand on end to think of any hearer of mine being damned. Will you picture yourselves in that position? The word has gone forth, Depart, you cursed. Do you see the pit as it opens to swallow you up? Do you listen to the shrieks and the yells of those who have preceded you to that eternal lake of torment? Instead of picturing the scene, I turn to you with the words of the inspired Prophet and I say, Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?   
Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, I cannot let you put away religion thus. No, I think of what is to come after death. I should be destitute of all humanity if I should see a person about to poison himself and did not dash away the cup. Or if I saw another about to plunge from London Bridge, if I did not assist in preventing him from doing so. And I should be worse than a fiend if I did not now, with all love and kindness and earnestness, beseech you to lay hold on eternal life, to labor not for the meat that perishes, but for the meat that endures unto everlasting life.   
Some hyper-Calvinists would tell me I am wrong in so doing. I cannot help it. I must do it. As I must stand before my Judge at last, I feel that I shall not make full proof of my ministry unless I entreat with many tears that you would be saved, that you would look unto Jesus Christ and receive His glorious salvation. But does even this avail? Are all my entreaties lost upon youdo you turn a deaf ear? Then again I change my note. Sinner, I have pleaded with you as a man pleads with his friend and were it for my own life I could not speak more earnestly this morning than I do speak concerning yours. I did feel earnest about my own soul, but not a whit more than I do about the souls of my congregation this morning. And therefore, if you put away these entreaties I have something elseI must threaten you.   
You shall not always have such warnings as these. A day is coming, when hushed shall be the voice of every Gospel minister, at least for you. For your ear shall be cold in death. It shall not be any more threat. It shall be the fulfillment of the threat. There shall be no promise, no proclamations of pardon and of mercyno peace-speaking blood. But you shall be in the land where the Sabbath is all swallowed up in everlasting nights of misery and where the preaching of the Gospel is forbidden because they would be unavailing. I charge you then, listen to this voice that now addresses your conscience. For if not, God shall speak to you in His wrath and say unto you in His hot displeasure, I called and you refused. I stretched out my hand and no man regarded. Therefore will I mock at your calamity. I will laugh when your fear comes. Sinner, I threaten you again. Remember, it is but a short time that you may have to hear these warnings. You imagine that your life will be long, but do you know how short it is? Have you ever tried to think how frail you are? Did you ever see a body when it has been cut in pieces by the anatomist? Did you ever see such a marvelous thing as the human frame?   
*Strange, a harp of a thousand strings, Should keep in tune so long.*   
Let but one of those cords be twisted, let but a mouthful of food go in the wrong direction and you may die. The slightest chance, as we have it, may send you swiftly to death, when God wills it. Strong men have been killed by the smallest and slightest accident and so may you. In the Chapel, in the House of God, men have dropped down dead. How often do we hear of men falling in our streetsrolling out of time into eternity, by some sudden stroke? And are you sure that heart of yours is quite sound? Is the blood circulating with all accuracy? Are you quite sure of that? And if it is so, how long shall it be?   
O, perhaps there are some of you here that shall never see Christmas Day. It may be the mandate has gone forth already, Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live. Out of this vast congregation, I might with accuracy tell how many will be dead in a year. Certain it is that the whole of us shall never meet together again in any one assembly. Some out of this vast crowd, perhaps some two or three, shall depart before the new year shall be ushered in. I remind you, then, my Brothers and Sisters, that either the gate of salvation may be shut, or else you may be out of the place where the gate of mercy stands. Come, then, let the threat have power with you. I do not threaten because I would alarm without cause, but in hopes that a friends threat may drive you to the place where God has prepared the feast of the Gospel.   
And now, must I turn hopelessly away? Have I exhausted all that I can say? No, I will come to you again. Tell me what it is, my Brothers and Sisters, that keeps you from Christ. I hear one say, Oh, Sir, it is because I feel myself too guilty. That cannot be, my Friend, that cannot be. But, Sir, I am the chief of sinners. Friend, you are not. The chief of sinners died and went to Heaven many years ago. His name was Saul of Tarsus, afterwards called Paul the Apostle. He was the chief of sinners, I know he spoke the Truth of God. No, but you say still, I am too vile. You cannot be viler than the chief of sinners. You must, at least, be second worst. Even supposing you are the worst now alive, you are second worst, for he was chief. But suppose you are the worst, is not that the very reason why you should come to Christ? The worse a man is, the more reason he should go to the hospital or physician. The more poor you are, the more reason you should accept the charity of another. Now, Christ does not want any merits of yours. He gives freely. The worse you are, the more welcome you are.  
But let me ask you a questionDo you think you will ever get better by staying away from Christ? If so, you know very little as yet of the way of salvation at all. No, Sir, the longer you stay, the worse you will grow. Your hope will grow weaker, your despair will become stronger. The nail with which Satan has fastened you down will be more firmly clenched and you will be less hopeful than ever. Come, I beseech you, remember there is nothing to be gained by delay, but by delay everything may be lost. But, cries another, I feel I cannot believe. No, my Friend and you never will believe if you look first at your believing. Remember, I am not come to invite you to faith, but am come to invite you to Christ. But you say, What is the difference? Why, just this, if you first of all say, I want to believe a thing, you never do it. But your first inquiry must be, What is this thing that I am to believe? Then will faith come as the consequence of that search.   
Our first business has not to do with faith, but with Christ. Come, I beseech you, on Calvarys mount and see the Cross. Behold the Son of GodHe who made the heavens and the earthdying for your sins. Look to Him, is there not power in Him to save? Look at His face so full of pity. Is there not love in His heart to prove Him willing to save? Surely Sinner, the sight of Christ will help you to believe. Do not believe first and then go to Christ, or else your faith will be a worthless thing. Go to Christ without any faith and cast yourself upon Him, sink or swim. But I hear another cry, Oh Sir, you do not know how often I have been invited, how long I have rejected the Lord. I do not know and I do not want to know. All I know is that my Master has sent me to compel you to come inso come along with you now. You may have rejected a thousand invitationsdont make this the thousandth-and-one.   
You have been up to the House of God and you have only been Gospelhardened. But do I not see a tear in your eye? Come, my Brother, dont be hardened by this mornings sermon. O, Spirit of the living God, come and melt this heart for it has never been melted and compel him to come in! I cannot let you go on such idle excuses as thatif you have lived so many years slighting Christthere are so many reasons why now you should not slight Him. Did I hear you whisper that this was not a convenient time? Then what must I say to you? When will that convenient time come? Shall it come when you are in Hell? Will that time be convenient? Shall it come when you are on your dying bed and the death throttle is in your throatshall it come then? Or when the burning sweat is scalding your browand then again, when the cold clammy sweat is thereshall those be convenient times?   
When pains are racking you and you are on the borders of the tomb? No, Sir, this morning is the convenient time. May God make it so. Remember, I have no authority to ask you to come to Christ tomorrow. The Master has given you no invitation to come to Him next Tuesday. The invitation is, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, for the Spirit says, today. Come now and let us reason togetherwhy should you put it off? It may be the last warning you shall ever have! Put it off and you may never weep again in Chapel. You may never have so earnest a discourse addressed to you. You may not be pleaded with as I would plead with you now. You may go away and God may say, He is given unto idols, let him alone. He shall throw the reins upon your neckand then, mark your course is sure, but it is sure damnation and swift destruction.   
And now again, is it all in vain? Will you not now come to Christ? Then what more can I do? I have but one more resort and that shall be tried. I can be permitted to weep for you. I can be allowed to pray for you. You shall scorn the address if you likeyou can laugh at the preacheryou shall call him fanatic if you will. He will not chide you, he will bring no accusation against you to the great Judge. Your offense, so far as he is concerned, is forgiven before it is committed. But you will remember that the message that you are rejecting this morning is a message from one who loves you and it is given to you also by the lips of one who loves you. You will recollect that you may play your soul away with the devil, that you may listlessly think it a matter of no importancebut there lives at least one who is in earnest about your soul and one who before he came here wrestled with his God for strength to preach to you and who when he has gone from this place will not forget his hearers of this morning.

I say again, when words fail us we can give tearsfor words and tears are the arms with which Gospel ministers compel men to come in. You do not know and I suppose could not believe, how anxious a man whom God has called to the ministry feels about his congregation and especially about some of them. I heard but the other day of a young man who attended here a long time and his fathers hope was that he would be brought to Christ. He became acquainted, however, with an infidel. And now he neglects his business and lives in a daily course of sin. I saw his fathers poor wan face. I did not ask him to tell me the story himself, for I felt it was raking up a trouble and opening a sore. I fear, sometimes, that good mans gray hairs may be brought with sorrow to the grave.   
Young men, you do not pray for yourselves, but your mothers wrestle for you. You will not think of your own souls, but your fathers anxiety is exercised for you. I have been at Prayer Meetings, when I have heard children of God pray there and they could not have prayed with more earnestness and more intensity of anguish if they had been each of them seeking their own souls salvation. And is it not strange that we should be ready to move Heaven and earth for your salvation and that still you should have no thought for yourselves, no regard to eternal things?   
Now I turn for one moment to some here. There are some of you here members of Christian Churcheswho make a profession of religion. But unless I am mistaken in youand I shall be happy if I amyour profession is a lie. You do not live up to it, you dishonor it. You live in the perpetual practice of absenting yourselves from Gods House, if not in sins worse than that. Now I ask such of you who do not adorn the doctrine of God your Savior, do you imagine that you can call me your pastor and yet that my soul cannot tremble over you and in secret weep for you? Again, I say it may be but little concern to you how you defile the garments of your Christianity, but it is a great concern to Gods hidden ones, who sigh and cry and groan for the iniquities of the professors of Zion.   
Now does anything else remain to the minister besides weeping and prayer? Yes, there is one thing else. God has given to His servants not the power of regeneration, but He has given them something akin to it. It is impossible for any man to regenerate his neighbor. And yet how are men born to God? Does not the Apostle say of such an one that he was begotten by him in his bonds? Now the minister has a power given him of God, to be considered both the father and the mother of those born to God, for the Apostle said he travailed in birth for souls till Christ was formed in them. What can we do then? We can now appeal to the Spirit. I know I have preached the Gospel, that I have preached it earnestly. I challenge my Master to honor His own promise. He has said it shall not return unto Him void and it shall not. It is in His hands, not mine. I cannot compel you, but You, O Spirit of God, who has the key of the heart, You can compel.   
Did you ever notice in that chapter of the Revelation, where it says, Behold I stand at the door and knock, a few verses before, the same Person is described as He who has the key of David. So that if knocking will not avail, He has the key and can and will come in. Now if the knocking of an earnest minister prevails not with you this morning, there remains still that secret opening of the heart by the Spirit, so that you shall be compelled. I thought it my duty to labor with you as though I must do it. Now I throw it into my Masters hands. It cannot be His will that we should travail in birth and yet not bring forth spiritual children. It is with Him. He is master of the heart and the day shall declare itthat some of you constrained by Sovereign Grace have become the willing captives of the all-conquering Jesus and have bowed your hearts to Him through the sermon of this morning.  
[Mr. Spurgeon concluded with a very interesting anecdote, but as its insertion would make the sermon too long for a penny number, the publishers have decided to print it as one of the New Park Street Tracts.]

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CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTS DISCIPLES   
NO. 2650

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 16, 1882.

**If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters,   
yes, and his own life, also, he cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:26.**

**Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed Him, If you continue in My word, you are My disciples indeed. John 8:31.**

**By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.   
John 13:35.**

**By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.   
John 15:8.**

This morning, [Sermon #1669, Volume 28Teaching for the Outer and Inner Circles read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org] I

preached upon one of the privileges of the disciples of ChristWhen they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples. They formed the inner circle and they had the privilege of hearing the expositions and explanations which our Lord gave only to His disciples. As I was speaking, I think the question must have arisen in the hearts of many of my hearers, What is a disciple of Chris? and also the further enquiry, Am I one of His disciples? It is very important for us who are preachers to know what a disciple is, for we are bidden to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. What is involved in the making of a disciple? We cannot fully answer that question until we know what a disciple is!

In order to help you, dear Friends, to ascertain whether you are truly disciples of Christ, I am going to call your attention to four texts in which the Lord Jesus mentions some of the things which are essential to true discipleshipand without which a man cannot be His disciple. I pray the Holy Spirit to make those who are disciples to rejoice in their discipleship and to count it the highest honor of their lives to have the Son of God for their Teacher and Leader. And I also pray that those who fear that they are not His disciples may be brought to Him even while I am speaking. May they, by His Grace, resolve that they, also, will be His disciples, and may the Divine Spirit conduct them into the School of Christ, that they may sit at His feet and receive His Word from this time forth!

I. The first mark of discipleship to which I am going to call your attention is mentioned in the Gospel according to Luke, the 14th Chapter, and the 26th verse. If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life, also, he cannot be My disciple These words prove that the first requisite of a disciple of Christ is WHOLEHEARTEDNESS.

The meaning of this passage is that Christs disciple must so love his Lord that, in comparison with the love he bears to Christ, all other love shall burn but dimly and be scarcely worthy of even being named! This verse has puzzled a great many people because they have supposed that Christ really wished them to hate their father, mother, wife and so on. The slightest possible thought ought to have convinced them that He could never have wished them to do anything of the kind! If you take Christs Words without seeking to find their meaning, you can make mischief out of them, for, sometimes, He speaks very boldlyI might almost have said, with the utmost reverence, very baldlyin order to make His point clear. He speaks in a manner which, in others, would be foolishness. He goes beyond what He means us to understand literally, because He knows that this is the only way in which He can bring His teaching home to some minds. There was really no reason why anybody should have made such a mistake and understood these words just as they stand in our version. It is not possible for a man to be a disciple of Christ if he hates anybody, for the religion of Christ is a religion of loveand hatred must be expelled from the bosom of those who receive it. It is utterly inconceivable that anybody who hated his father could be a disciple of Christthat would be a violation of the First Commandment with promise, which bids us honor our father and mother. Certainly Jesus never taught anything contrary to the Commandments of His Father! He who hated his own mother would be a monsternot a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus who cared for His mother amid His agony on the Cross. Does not nature, itself, teach us that our love should certainly flow out to those who were the authors of our being and who so kindly cared for us when we were unable to take care of ourselves? I am not afraid that any of you, dear Friends, will err in that respect and then fancy that you have the warrant of Christ for hating your father and mother!

Then, should not a man love his wife? Yes, that he should, for the Apostle says, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church. I have heard of one who was said to love his wife too much, but I did not believe it, because the model for a husbands love is, even as Christ also loved the church, and who could go beyond that? A man may be excessively submissive or devoted which, in some cases, may have been carried to such excess as to become folly and idolatry, but from this evil I hope that we have escaped. But a man could not be a disciple of Christ if he literally hated his wife. He would be unworthy of the society even of the moral, much more of the society of the gracious, if he so acted. Neither can we imagine Christ bidding anybody hate his own children. Nature itself dictates that we should love them and we dowe cannot help it, nor do we wish to help it. We should be traitors to Christ if we tried to expel an affection which He, Himself, has implanted within us. No man can hate his children and yet be a Christian! It would be a clear proof that he had nothing of Christianity about him, just as the Apostle says, of another matter, if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. So, we are not to hate our childrennor are we to hate our brothers and sisters. It is only in a comparative sense and not

literally, that the term can possibly be used. And to make this very clear, Christ said that we are to hate our own life. The next step to that would be suicide and the Savior could never have meant any of His followers to commit that terrible sin! What He did mean was that He is to have the first place in our hearts and all who are dear to us are to be second. Yes, and we ourselves are to be second, too, and are to be prepared to break every earthly tie rather than the tie which binds us to Christ Jesus our Lord.

The teaching of the text is that Christ is to be loved more than all our relations. It may be that we shall never have to endure the test of choosing between Christ and our loved ones, but some have had to do that. You have, perhaps, heard the story of the martyr who was going out to be burned for Christ. And as his enemies had failed to move him from his steadfastness, they made one more attempt to do so as the good man was on his way to the stake. They brought out his wife and his 11 children to meet him and they were all weeping and kneeling down before him, begging him to recant. His wife pleaded, My Husband, be not so willful! Do not go to the stake, and each of the children had been taught to lay hold of the father and to say to him, Father, live for my sake, and for mine, Father. This was a trial which the good man had not expected and as he stood there, surrounded by his loved ones, he said, God knows how dearly I love you all, and how gladly, for your sakes, I would do anything that I may do, with a clear conscience, to make you happy. But, compared with Christ and His Gospel, which I love with all my heart and soul, I must give you all up and treat you as if I had no love for you. I must go and yield up my body to be burned for the Truth of Christ. Therefore, do not weep and break my heart. It was grandly done on his part and you can probably get a better idea of the meaning of my text from that incident than I could possibly convey to you by any words that I might use.

Well, dear Friends, though your faith may never be subjected to that supreme test, a matter of life or death, yet you may have to be tested to see whether you love Christ more than you love your relatives. There was a certain godly bishop who had a brother who came and asked him to ordain him and to give him a living, for his trade did not prosper as he wished. The good bishop loved his brother and he would have done anything that was right to help him. But he said, My dear Brother, you are not called of God to undertake such work, so I cannot ordain you, or give you a living. I will gladly give you money to help you in your business, but I cannot make use of my position in the church to put you into a place for which you are not qualified. Had you been a fit and proper person for this holy service, I would have been delighted to carry out your wish. But as you are not, I cannot use my influence on your behalf in this way. I wish that every bishop would act in the same waythey have not always done so. Yet there was the crucial point in which the good man felt that he must rather regard the welfare of the church than the benefit of his relative and he must treat him just as though he had been a stranger. That is how we should deal with anyone who comes to us for a similar purposeif he is a suitable person, let him be encouraged to enter upon the work for which he is qualified. But if he is not, let him go back to his forge, or to his plow, or to his awl, or to his plane, or let him engage in some business in which he will be earning a livelihood and doing no mischief to his fellow men, as he would do if he were put to work for which he is not fitted.

Have not some of you, dear Friends, met with cases in which the same difficulty has arisen? You must either do a wrong to Christ and to His people, or else you must appear to be hard and unkind towards some relative or friend. Well, you cannot be Christs disciple if you hesitate a minute about what course you shall adopt! Brothers, sisters, wife, children, father, mother must never be allowed for a moment to be put in competition with Christ! I remember one who, when quite a youth, felt that he must be baptized on profession of his faith in Christ, but those who were nearest and dearest to him did not agree with him upon that matter. He had not one relative who thought as he did concerning it. He laid his case before them and, being so young, he asked that he might have permission to carry out his conscientious convictions, but, at the same time, he said, If the permission does not come, I shall obey My Lords command, for, in this case, I acknowledge no father or mother, but simply do as my Savior bids me. In matters of religion, Christ alone is our Leaderand our conscience can never obey any supremacy but that of our Lord Jesus Christ. This decision is to be announced very gently, without any bitterness of spirit, with much humilityand prayer for wisdom and guidancebut there must be no question about your action! You are to put your foot down, and say, In everything which concerns Christ and my soul, I call no man, father, upon earth, but, at all costs, I must follow my Lord wherever He leads me. I think you can now see the drift of the Saviors Words. The rule for you who are His disciples must beChrist first and everybody else as far down as you like. Everybody treated with kindness and due consideration, but nobody permitted to usurp the Throne of the great King. So, in the first place, we must love Christ more than all our relatives.

And, next, we must love Christ more than life. You know that there have been many who have not loved their lives as much as they have loved their Lord, for they have freely yielded them up for the sake of Him who laid down His life for them. Christians, in past ages, have known what was involved in being faithful to Christ. You may have read that letter which Pliny wrote, concerning the early Christians, in which he said that he knew not what to do with them, for they were men of good character, but they had this one peculiarity that they must in everything follow Christ. They actually came with calm confidence, even to the Roman judgment seat, well knowing that if they were convicted of being Christians, they would be put to deathand they seemed as if they were eager to dieso anxious were they to put their love to Christ before any thought of freedom from pain or escape from death! What the torments were, to which they were put, under their many persecutors, I scarcely dare to tell you. Think of one of them forced to sit in a red-hot iron chair. And of others dragged at the heels of wild horses, or tossed to and fro by bulls, or torn in pieces by savage beasts. Everything that could add ignominy and pain to death was invented in those timesbut did the martyrs flinch or turn back? No. They stood fast for Christs sake and threw their lives away as if they were worth nothing at all, rather than be found traitors to Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior!

We are to be prepared to do the same as they did, if necessary. Only, in our case, probably it will never come to that point in this country where, thank God, we have so much civil and religious liberty. Yet, often, a similar test may be applied to us in a modified way. There may be, for instance, some loss of business through doing what we know to be right! There are some persons who have been in the habit of carrying on their trade on the Sabbathbut when they have become Christs disciples, they have shut up their shop on that day, and people have said to them, You will be ruined, you will never earn a living. You know, we must live. I have often heard that last little sentence, but I do not believe it. I do not see any necessity for us to live. There is a necessity for us to be true to Christ, but not for us to continue to live! It is a great deal better that we should die than that we should do a wrong thing. And we should be prepared at any time to say, If necessary, we will let our trade go and we will be poor. But we will keep a clear conscience. And he who has that little bird in his bosom will never lack for music! And though he has scarcely a penny in his pocket, yet if he wears the flower called heartsense in his buttonhole, he need never envy the richest man in the world!

It may happen to you, in your business, that there will be an opportunity of getting money by being thieves in a respectable kind of waythere are plenty of such thieves about. But if you are a Christian, you will say, No, money gained by dishonesty will carry a curse with it. I cannot touch it any more than I would handle blood-money. If it comes by any wrong method, I must leave it alone, for pelf and wealth shall not come to me if they cannot come honestly. I must and will serve the Lord Jesus Christ first and foremost.

Sometimes you know that for Christs sake, our Brothers and Sisters go as missionaries to India or China, and some go to the Congo or to other stations in Africa where it is almost certain that, in a short time, they will be cut down by the fever. But how brave it is on their part! How truly a disciple of Christ is such a man or such a woman, who, knowing all that may be expected, nevertheless says, My Lord calls me to serve Him in Africa. And if He sends me to a mangrove swamp and to a fever, I will as readily go there for Him as if He summoned me to sit upon a throne.

To sum up the teaching of this first text, it means that Christ is to be loved more than anything. If this were the choice set before usthe whole world, or Christthank God there are many of us who would not wait a minute for the decision! And if this were the choiceshame in the eyes of men, or else the far greater shame of deserting the Savior, oh, I hope we would not hesitate even for an instant! No, says the Christian, Christ is my All-in-All. If I have all things, I will try to find Him in them and if I have nothing, I will find all things in Him. So the meaning of this text is that Christ must have wholehearted servants and if you come to Him to be His disciples, you must bring your whole being with you. Christ will never be King over a divided manhood. There was a time when this island was a heptarch and seven little kings ruled over it. But now we have but one sovereign and in this united realm we never shall have but one supreme ruler. So should it be in mans heart. The devil is quite willing to share the kingdom with Christ. Oh, he says, let Christ reign and let

me reign, too! We shall make an excellent pair to rule over men. But Christ will not have it so. If we are to be His subjects, He will rule over us from the crown of our head to the soles of our feet, and He will not permit Satan to have a single stronghold within us that he can call his own. Out you must go, you vile usurper, for He has come who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The crown sits upon His brow, nor will He allow a rival even for an hour! Come, then, Beloved, what do you say? Are you wholehearted for Christ? If not, you are not His disciples. Listen while I read our first text again, and as I do, you read into it the true and full meaning of the words and feel their force. If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life, also, he cannot be My disciple.

II. The second requisite for being a disciple of Christ is found in the 8th Chapter of the Gospel according to John, at the 31st verseThen Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, If you continue in My word, you are My disciples indeed. So CONTINUANCE is the next trait in the character of a true disciple of Christ.

There are a great many persons who, like those Jews, profess to believe in Jesus Christ for a time. When opposition and persecution came, they deserted Him and so proved that they were not really His disciples. I do not know much about the merits of the question, which is often discussed in the papers, with regard to enlistment for a short or a long term of service in the Queens army, but I know that my Lord and Master will not accept any of you unless you enter His army for lifeno, morefor all eternity! In Christs true Church there is no profession of faith merely for a time. Once you have made it, you have made it forever. The very way of confessing Christ, which is by Baptism, signifies this, for the man who is rightly immersed into the name of the Sacred Trinity is first buried and then he rises againand that burial, having once taken place, can never be cancelledwhatever happens, it is an accomplished fact. Then, again, the act of immersion can never cease to be a fact. Marks made in the flesh may be removed, but when the watermark has been put upon the whole body, it can never be removed. He who has been buried with Christ may have been a hypocrite and a deceiver, but, notwithstanding his hypocrisy and deception, he has passed through the outward form of the ordinance and he can never clear himself from the responsibility of it. It will be to his everlasting disgrace if he is a baptized reprobate! At the Day of Judgment it shall be conclusive evidence of his guilt that he either tried to deceive himself, or deceived Gods people and made a mockery of the ordinances of Christ. But in the case of a true believer in Christ, continuance in the right road proves him to be a Christian.

First, we are to continue believing Christs words. Whatever new doctrinal errors may spring up, we are to take no notice of them, but just continue in the faith of Christ. Then shall we be His disciples indeed! In these evil days, some new heresy appears nearly every week. There are some people who seem to spend all their time in inventing lies and these, joined to the old errors that are continually being vamped up, puzzle those who are not well established in the faith so that they scarcely know what is orthodox doctrine and what is heterodox. But he who keeps close to his Master, sits at His feet and learns of Himwhen he is taught of the Spiritand holds fast what he has received. Mr. Whitefield used to say that in his day there were some persons for whom it was impossible to make a creed. He said, You might as well try to make a suit of clothes for the moon, for they change as frequently as she does. And we have many people of the same sort in our day! They are everything by starts, and nothing long. But that is not a characteristic of Christian discipleship! A man is not Christs disciple if he is tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, allowing anybody to put an oar into his boat and turn and twist him wherever the intruder pleases. No, the Masters message to His followers is, If you continue in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

But we must also continue in obedience. It is the part of a true disciple of Christ to do his Lords will in the teeth of every temptation that may assail him. You will not be obedient to Him very long without being pulled by the coat, first this way, and then that. But the true disciple of Christ says, If all the kingdoms of this world were to be given me on condition that I would fall down and worship the god of this world, I would not, for an instant, think of doing so, for I am enlisted in the army of the Cross. I serve the Lord Christ and Him alone.

And we are also to continue in Christs word when we are in affliction. There are, alas, some who, if God seems to treat them roughly, grow mightily offended with Him. A dear child is taken away from their family circle and they say that they will never forgive God. They have trouble upon trouble and straightway they complain that God behaves evilly to themand they are ready to turn back at the first crossroad that they come to in their pilgrimage. But this will not do for those who would be disciples indeed. We must hold on, come fair or come foul, and this must be our motto, one that I have often quoted to you and one that I love to think of myselfThough He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. We have committed ourselves to Him as unto a faithful Creator. We have lifted our hand in token of our allegiance to Him, and we cannot go back!

Dear Friends who have just lately been converted to Christ, let me exhort you to be steadfast and immovable! You cannot be Christs disciples unless you are firm and decided. A Christian soldier who had to sleep in a tent with some ungodly comrades, knelt down at night to pray and every time he did so, he was assailed by all sorts of missiles. He consulted the chaplain as to what he had better do and that time-serving individual said he thought, perhaps, it was not necessary for the soldier to kneel down publicly before he retired to rest. The soldier tried the cowardly plan for one night, but he was very unhappy and his conscience was troubled about it. He had failed to bear testimony for Christ, so, the next night, he knelt down as he had done before and it pleased God that, by degrees, the opposition ceased and, more than that, the influence of his brave example and the words he spoke at different times, brought all the other men in the tent to kneel down, too, before they went to rest! Whether they were all converted or not, I cannot tell, but, at any rate, there was at least the form of prayer in that way. When the soldier saw the chaplain, again, and told him what had happened, the chaplain commended him, and then the soldier asked him, Dont you think it is better for us always to keep our colors flying?

That is a good watchword for you, BelovedAlways keep your colors flying! There are some professors who say, We can carry our flag wrapped up in a waterproof case and when there is a favorable opportunity, we can let it fly in the breeze. No, no! It is best to keep your colors always flying. There may be danger and difficulty through flying the flag, but a hundred times worse danger comes from rolling it up and putting it away out of sight. Never be ashamed of what there is no reason to be ashamed of! If any man is ashamed of being a Christian, surely Christ has cause to be ashamed of him! Let it not be so with you, dear Friend, but rather let each one say

*Ashamed of Jesus? That dear Friend   
On whom my hopes of Heaven depend?   
No! When I blush, be this my shame   
That I no more revere His name.*

But, as to blushing when I acknowledge that I am His servant, may never such a crimson token of shame come onto my cheek! So stand fast in the faith, Beloved, for thus shall you prove that you are, indeed, Christs disciples.

III. I must now pass on to a third mark of a genuine disciple of Christ, that is, BROTHERLY LOVE. Kindly look at the 13th Chapter of Johns Gospel, and the 35th verseBy this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

This is to be a mark of discipleship which all men can see. Whenever there is genuine love among Christian people, everybody knows at once that they are Christs disciples. Good men and bad menthe most ignorant and the most foolish men cannot help seeing that love is, as it were, a sign hung out as a mark of the business done within. That disciple whom Jesus loved, wrote, Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God, for God is love.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, how are we to love our brethren so as to let all men know that we are Christs disciples? One ready way is by considering their needs and doing the best that we can to help them out of their difficulties. If we say to the cold and the hungry, Be you warmed and be you filled, and yet do nothing practically to help them, how dwells the love of God in us? What kind of Christianity is that which is liberal only in words? Dear Friends, there are many poor people among us who are struggling to get a livelihood and, alas, there are many others who cannot find any employment at all. And it is incumbent upon any who are being prospered by God to help their poor brothers as far as they can. Very often a man can truly help his fellow, even though he has no money to spare. I read a pretty story of a Cornish miner who was getting rather old and the captain of the mine said, John, I think that I can put you into an easier berth than the one you now hold. You will get more money and you will have to be an overseer of others rather than to do much yourself. I know that I can confide in you, so I will put you into that place next month. The miner said, in reply, Captain, do you know our brother Tregony? Yes, answered the captain. You know that he is older than I am, said the miner. He cannot do a days work, now, and I am afraid that he will have to give up altogether. I wish you would let him have that berth because, though I am getting old, I think that I can keep on for another year or two. So let old Tregony have the overseers position.

The captain did so and that is true Christian love when a man is willing to make a sacrifice because he feels that he is not quite as much in need as another. I remember saying to a poor widow who came one morning to the Orphanage with her child, There is another woman outside. You have been talking to her, have you not, while you were waiting to come in? Yes, Sir, she answered. I said, She has nine children and we can only take one. How many have you? Three, replied the woman. Well, now, I asked, which of those three shall we take? Oh, Sir! she said, there is not a minute needed to deliberate about it! You take one of that other poor womans children. I will try to do the best I can, though it is a hard pinch for me, but that woman has a heavier burden to carry than I have, poor thing. I was pleased to see such a spirit of selfsacrifice and I am always glad when Christian people feel that kind of sympathy and love for one another. How often might rough roads be made more smooth if all acted like that! This is just what we must be constantly doing, for we cannot be Christs disciples unless we have love for one another.

Beside that, we can show our love to our brethren by bearing their faults. It is a grand thing to be able to put up with a good deal. There are some people who seem to think that they have come into the world that other people may put up with themand they certainly do play their part, for they give other people plenty to put up with! And if anybody should in the least resent it, they say, So-and-So is out of temper with me. I was going to say that an angel might be out of temper with some people, but I do not suppose that he would. Still, I wish that these people would remember the provocations they often give as well as the sharp retorts they sometimes get. Oh, says one, I do not believe that there is any love among Christians. Brother, you are measuring our corn with your bushel! You see that you have not any love in your heart, for, if you had, there would be some love in your eyes and you would perceive some, also, in others. But when it is clean gone out of your own soul, you suppose it must also have departed from others.

Of course, you do not admit that it has gone out of you and you imagine that you see outside of you what is really inside, so, when you say that there is no love anywhere, it is because you are looking at yourself in the mirror, that is all. But we who love the Lord can, I trust, bear with one another. I sometimes try to think which is the greater wonderthat you, dear Friends, have put up with me so long, or that I have put up with you! There are some of you who are the best people in the whole world and there are others of you who are not the best, but rather the reverse, and some of you do cause us trouble sometimes. Well, may God give all of us great patience and may we believe in one another! That is half the battle in all the difficulties that arise among Christiansthat we should not impute wrong motives to our fellows, and not be ready to bring accusations against one anotherbut just believe that each of our fellow members is a child of God and if there is something which he has done, and which looks wrong, say, It must have been misrepresented or misreported. I am sure it musthe cannot have done such a thing. I will stand up for him. He is my Brother-in-Christ, so I will defend him.

There is one other point in which some of you may exercise love for one another and that is, in rejoicing in each others happiness. This is a point which is far too often forgotten. You know the tendency among menhere is a man who is rising in the world, so there are many who say, Ah, humph! They do not say anything more, but they shrug their shoulders and they look full of unutterable things. Or there is a Brother who has done well in the Church and he is referred to in terms of approbation. Then at once somebody begins to try to pull him down and says, Ah, yes! I could have done what he has done. Then why did you not do it? Oh, but he had such great advantages! Yes, perhaps he had, and you also have had opportunities of doing something or other, but you have not made the best use of them. Now, instead of being jealous of our Brothers success, ought we not rather to be rejoicing in one another? If a man is poor, let him rejoice that everybody is not as poor as he is! If he is troubled about his worldly circumstances and he meets with a Brother who has no cause for such sorrow, let him say, I am glad he is better off than I am. I do not want him to have anything to worry him as my troubles perplex me. I praise God for his prosperity, I bless the Lord for his happiness. Then when we see an especially gracious and gifted man coming into the Church and serving God, let us welcome him heartily and say to one another, Here is a true comrade for us and we are glad that God has sent us such a man to help us in His work.

I wish that we were all of the mind of that noble Spartan who wished to be a magistrate, but another man opposed him and received twice as many votes as he did. What did the Spartan say? I am grateful that the country has better men than myself and I am glad to see that it knows where to find them when it needs them. So, dear Friends, be glad when God provides better men than you are to do His work. Let the preacher rejoice when another preacher excels him. That is the point to which we must all bring ourselves. Let the Sunday school teacher praise the Lord when she finds another teacher who altogether eclipses her. What a blessed thing it is for the Bible class teacher who has a large company around him, to find another Brother raised up who gets a better class than his has ever been! Bless God when it is so, dear Friends. This is one of those points that is often difficult, but it ought to be easyand it would be easy if we had love for one another! And if we have not such love, we are not Christs disciples.

IV. I must close now with just a few remarks about the last characteristic of a disciple of Christ. It is mentioned in the 15th Chapter of Johns Gospel, at the 8th verseBy this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. So the last mark of a disciple is that of FRUIT-BEARING.

What is bearing fruit in this sense? Well, first, it is doing service for Christ. He said to His disciples, He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing, plainly implying that the fruit which is to come from abiding in Him will be seen by our doing something for Him. Christian men and women, the Lord Jesus Christ does not want to have any followers who never foil or fight for Him! He does not wish to have with Him shepherds who never feed His flockmerely nominal Christians who never do anything for Him. Does this touch any of you? Some of you come in here, Sunday after Sunday, and you sit and enjoy my ministry, but you do not help in the Sunday school, you do not distribute tracts, you do not preach, you do not do anything! How can you be Christs disciples? I suppose you are like some officers of whom I have read, who draw large salaries because they are such distinguished ornaments to the service. It is a great honor to have these people in the army, though they never saw a sword drawn except on review days. So, no doubt, it is a very fine thing to have a number of Church members who are simply ornamental personsthey swell our numbers when they are counted with us and people say, They are so very respectable that they help to make us all respectable.

Well, now, to tell you the truth, we do not care an atom about your respectability! We think that the most respectable person in the world that is, the person who most deserves to be respectedis the one who is doing something! He who does nothing deserves to be starved, even as the Apostle Paul said, This we commanded you, that if any will not work, neither shall he eat, which is much the same thing as letting him starve. Let us try to be fruit-bearing disciples by doing all that we can for Christ, because, if we do not bear fruit, we cannot be His disciples.

Next, fruit-bearing will be proved by our prayers. Notice the words of our LordIf you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit. Prayer, then, is a blessed fruit of Divine Graceprayer for others, prayer for Christs Church, the prayer that brings down unnumbered blessings from above. Many a sick, bed-ridden saint who cannot speak and who can scarcely lift her hands, can lie there and do great things in prayer! Joan of Arc was not half so mighty as that poor invalid! She is the Kings true warrior! While she lies there apparently helpless, she is commanding the legions of Heaven by her invincible petitions! See, then, dear Friends, that you bear much fruit in earnest, prevailing prayer!

Another method of fruit-bearing is by a holy character. O Beloved, I implore you to be holy men and women! Seek after close conformity to the likeness of Christ. Nothing does more good for a Church than for its members to live the Gospel in all their concerns at home and abroad.

But I think that we shall not bear fruit as we should unless we endeavor to bring converts to Jesus. Dear mistress, seek to win the soul of your little maid! Good master, employing so many hands, get them together, sometimes, and talk to them about your Saviorand pray that He may be their Savior, too. Can you do it? There ought not to be one barren member of this Church. Everyone ought to be able to feel that when he comes before God at the last, he shall be able to say, Here am I and the children You have given me. For this let us live! For this let us labor! If we do not, we cannot be Christs disciples.

I remember one who never did anything for Christ and when somebody spoke to him about his lack of fruit-bearing, he said that he bore inside fruit. I never heard that idea before, so I turned it over in my mind and, the next time I met him, I said to him, Are you still bearing inside fruit? He answered, Yes. Well, I said, we shall never get at it till you are cut down. Fruit is evidently intended to be an

outside thing that is borne for the benefit of others! So, in this respect, Brothers and Sisters, see to it that you are fruitful by rendering all possible service to our Lord and Master.

The real application of my four texts is thisAre you, dear Friends, Christs disciples? Let that question be passed around and let these four marks help us to judge ourselvesare we distinguished from those who are not Christs disciples by our wholeheartedness, continuance, brotherly love and fruit-bearing? May all these things be in us and abound. And if we have none of them, may we apply to Christ for them! Lie at His feet. Confess your sin and then look up, believe in Him and live forevermore! The Lord bless you, dear Friends, 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 #1159 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

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**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he has laid   
the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build,**

**and was not able to finish.   
Luke 14:28-30.**

THIS passage is peculiar to Luke. He tells us that at the time when our Lord uttered it, great multitudes followed Him. It is observable that when our Lord was forsaken by the crowd, He was not depressed, and when His ministry became popular He was not elated. He was calm and wise in the midst of the excitement of the thronging multitudes. This passage is sufficient evidence of that fact. On this occasion our Lord spoke with a view to the winnowing of the great heap of nominal discipleship which lay before Him, that the chaff might be driven away and only the precious corn might remain.

The discourse before us reminds us of Gideons process of diminishing that vast but motley host of which the Lord said, The people are too many for Me. After having bid the faint-hearted go, He next brought down the remaining thousands to the river and bade them drink. And then He only kept for Himself those who lapped in a certain peculiar manner, which indicated their zeal, their speed, their energy and their experience. Our Lord tested His followers that He might have only those remaining who would be fit for the conquest of the world. To carry His precious treasure He would select vessels whom Divine Grace had made fit for His usethe rest He could dispense with.

Our Lord Jesus was far too wise to pride Himself upon the number of His converts. He cared, rather, for quality than quantity. He rejoiced over one sinner that repented, but 10,000 sinners who merely professed to have repented would have given Him no joy whatever. His heart longed after the real. He loathed the counterfeit. He panted after the substance the shadow could not content Him. His fan was in His hand with which to thoroughly purge His floor and His axe was laid to the root of the trees to hew down the fruitless. He was anxious to leave a living Church like good seed-corn in the landas free as possible from all admixture.

Therefore in this particular instance one might even think that He was repelling men rather than attracting them to His leadership. But, indeed, He was doing nothing of the kind! He understood right well that men, to be truly won, must be won by truththat the truest love is always honest, and that the best disciple is not he who joins the class of the great Master in a hurry, and then afterwards discovers that the learning is not such as

he expectedbut one who comes sighing after just such knowledge as the teacher is prepared to give. Moreover, our Lord knew what sometimes we may forgetthat there is no heartbreak in the world to the godly worker like that which comes of disappointed hopes.

When those who have said, Lord, I will follow You where ever You go, turn back unto their evil ways. And when the hot breath which shouted, Hosanna! turns into the cruel, cold-blooded cry, Crucify Him! Crucify Him, nothing is more injurious to a Church than a large dilution with half-hearted membersand nothing more dangerous to the persons themselves than to allow them to put on an untrue profession. Therefore did the Master take most care at the time when that care was most needed, that none should follow Him under misapprehension, but should be made fully aware of what was meant by being His disciples, so that they should not say afterwards, We have been misled. We have been beguiled into a service which disappoints us.

Unlike the enlisting sergeant, who sets forth all the glories of military service in glowing colors in order to gain a recruit, the great Captain of our salvation would have His followers take all things into consideration before they cast in their lot with Him. This morning our text may be equally suitable and its warning may be as necessary and as salutary as when first the Master pronounced it, for great multitudes are just now following Christa revival has come and stirred the mass of you. Among the would-be disciples (blessed be God!) are many whom the Lord Himself has called, for every one of whom we give most hearty thanks!

But with them, necessarily, (for when was it ever different?), there are others who are not called of God at all. They are moved by the natural impulse of imitating others and stirred by feelings which are, none the less, fleeting because just now they are intense. And therefore, in Christs name, it is ours to address you even as He did, and warn you in His own wordsIf any man comes to Me, and hates not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brother, and sisters, yes, and his own life, also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

To assist our memories, we will divide our meditation into three parts. The first will be headed in this mannertrue religion is a costly thing. The second shall bear this mottoWisdom suggests that before we enter upon it we should estimate the cost. And the third shall bear this inscription Cost what it may, it is worth what it costs.

I. First, then, it is clear from our text that TRUE RELIGION IS COSTLY. Far be it from us to create any confusion of thought here! The gifts of Gods Grace cost us nothing, neither could His salvation be purchased with money, nor with merit, nor by vows and penances. If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned. The Gospel motto is, without money and without price. We are justified freely by His Grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Yet, for all that, if a man will be a Christian it will cost him something. Consider a moment. Here is a blind man sitting by the wayside begging. He asks to have his eyes opened. Will it cost him anything? No, the Savior would not accept all the gold in the world for the cure! He will freely open his eyes. But when they are opened it will cost that blind man something! Obtaining his sight, he will be called upon to discharge the duties of one who has eyes. He will not be allowed, any longer, to sit there and beg, or, if he tries to do so, he will lose the sympathy which is bestowed upon blindness. Now that his eyes are opened he must use them, and earn his own bread. It will cost him something, for he will now be conscious of the darkness of the night which he knew nothing of before!

And there are sad sights which now he must look upon which never grieved him before, for often what the eyes do not see, the heart does not know. A man cannot gain a faculty except at some expense. He that increases knowledge or the means of gaining it, increases both sorrow and duty. Take another case. A poor man is suddenly made a princeit will cost him the giving up of his former mannersand will involve him in new duties and cares. A man is set on the road to Heaven as a pilgrimdoes he pay anything to enter by the wicket gate? He does not. Free Grace admits him to the sacred way.

But when that man is put on the road to Heaven it will cost him something. It will cost him earnestness to knock at the wicket gate and sweat to climb the Hill Difficulty. It will cost him tears to find his roll again when he has lost it in the Arbor of Ease. It will cost him great care in going down the Valley of Humiliation. It will cost him resistance unto blood when he stands foot to foot with Apollyon in conflict. It will cost him many fears when he has to traverse the Valley of the Shadow of Death. It may cost him his life when he comes to Vanity Fair, if, like Faithful, he is called to bear testimony at the stake!

True religion is the gift of God and there is nothing we can do to purchase it. But at the same time, if we receive it, certain consequences will flow from itand we ought to consider whether we shall be able to put up with them. You may be sure that the cost must be great, since our Lord compares it to the building of a tower. The word here used for, tower, has often been employed to signify a turreted house, a villa, or country mansion. Which of you, says He to the people, intending to build for himself a mansion in which to reside at your ease, would not first of all count the cost? The building is to be a costly one!

Doddridge is wrong in the supposition that a temporary tower is here intended. That it would cost a considerable sum is clear from the Saviors saying that the wise man sits down and counts the cost. He does not merely stand up and pass his hand over his brow and say, This tower will cost me so many hundred pounds. Since it is to be an elaborate construction, an almost palatial edifice, he

sits down, like a merchant at his desk, and thoughtfully considers the undertaking. He consults the architect and the mason, and calculates what will be the expense of the outer

walls, of the roof, of the interior fittings and the like. And he does not make a rough estimate, but counts the cost as men count their gold.

It is evidently a matter of consequence with him, and so is true religionit is no trifle, but an all-important business. He who thinks that a careless, hit-or-miss, headlong venture will suffice for his eternal interests is the reverse of wise! True godliness is the building up of a character which will endure the Day of Judgment. It begins in laying deep the foundations in faith, love and a renewed heart. It is carried on by the putting patiently and carefully, and often painfully, stone upon stone, the materials of the fair edifice, diligently adding, to your faith courage, and to courage knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

Our lifework consists in building up ourselves in our most holy faith. Dont you see that it is a glorious palace to which the Christian character is likened? But, lest we should still think the expense small, our Lord compares it to a war! He speaks of the number of troops engaged in that war, showing that it is no petty skirmish of two insignificant tribes. He likens it to a war in which, upon one side there is an array of 10,000, and on the other a host of twenty thousand. Now, warfare is always expensive workbesides the cost for accoutrements and ammunition, there is the cost of human life and blood.

There is the removal of strong arms from work at home and the direr risks of defeat, captivity and devastation. The Lord compares religion, then, in its externals, to a battle between the gracious man and the evils rampant in the outside world. The disciple of Jesus has to defend himself against a gigantic foe and he has within himself a power which, so far as he is concerned, is not sufficient for the contest. The odds are fearful 10,000 against twenty thousand! Well does the Savior say in the latter case that it is well to sit down to consult. The king with the smaller army consults, asks his sage senators, takes counsel from experience, calls in good advisers and debates whether the thing can be done or not.

So should we consider the matter of our souls, for religion is a costly thing and not to be entered on, as the Frenchman said, with a light heart. That light heart cost his nation dearly and so it will, ourselves, if we indulge it. We might have inferred this, I think, from some other considerationsnamely from the fact that true religion is a lasting thing. It lasts for life. False religion comes and goes. True regeneration is never repeated and it is the commencement of a life which will loom no end, either in time or in eternity.

Now anything which is to last must be expensive! You shall get your glass colored, if you will, cheaply, but the sun will soon remove all its beauty. If you would obtain a glass which shall retain its color for centuries, every single step in the process of its manufacture will be costly, involving much labor and great care. So is it with true religion. You may get it cheap if you willit will look quite as well as the real thing and for a little while it will bring you almost all the comfort and respect which the genuine article would have brought youbut it will not last. Soon will its color fly and the beauty, the excellence which were there but in pretence, will soon have gone. You need, dear Friend, (I am sure you do), you need a godliness which will last you till you die! Well, then, it must cost you something, you can be sure of that.

Remember, also, that true religion will have to bear a strain, for it is certain to be opposed. This tower will not be built without opposition! It is like the wall of Jerusalem. Sanballat and Tobias will be sure to hinder the building. True religion must be able to endure hardnessif it cannot do that it is good for nothing. The old Toledo blade cost the warrior much at first hand, but when he has once procured it, he knows that it will cut through joint and marrow in the day of battle. Therefore he is not afraid to dash into the thick of the fray, trusting to its unrivalled temper and keen edge.

Could he not find a cheaper sword? I think he could have found it easily enough, and with small expense of gold. But then, in the moment when his sword smote upon his enemys helmet, instead of cleaving through the skull, it would snap in the warriors hand and cost him his life! Such is the cheap religion with which so many take up. There is no self-denial in it, no forsaking of the world, no giving up of carnal amusementsthey are just the same as the worldtheir religion costs them nothing and at last, when they need it, it will fail themit will snap like the ill-made sword in the day of battle and leave them defenseless!

Oh, if you want that which will endure the conflict, you must pay a cost for it! Jesus Christ knew that the persons to whom He spoke would not be able to bear the tests which awaited His disciples. They did not know that He would be crucified, for just then He was popular, and they hoped that He was to be the King of Israel. But the Savior knew that there would come dark days in which the King of the Jews would be hanged upon a tree and His disciples, even His true ones, would forsake Him for the moment and would flee. And therefore He, in effect, said to them, You must be prepared for cross-bearing. You must be prepared to follow Me amid derision and shame and reproach. And if you are not ready for this, your discipleship is a mistake!

In their case it did not stand the test. These people were nowhere to be found when the time of trial came. And remember, dear Friendsand I dwell with great emphasis upon this pointwe need a religion which will abide the inspection of the Great Judge at the Last Day. Now, there are things in the world which will endure for a while, but if they are closely looked at, and especially if they are placed under a microscope, they will be seen to have many flaws. No microscopic examination can, for a moment, be compared with the glance of Jehovah! He will read us through and through. Oh, what a withering will there be for fair professions in the day when His fiery eyes shall gaze upon them! Never does the grass dry up under the hot dry wind one-half as swiftly as the fair plains of pretended Christianity will wither beneath the Divine glance in the Last Tremendous Day!

He will look upon what men call Christendom and it will almost, if not altogether, vanish for, when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith upon the earth? Will it not, then, be evidently true that many are called, and but few are chosen? Strive to enter in at the strait gate, is still the voice of Christ to all of us, for many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able. If our religion is to be weighed in the balances, and may, perhaps, be found wanting, it is well for us to see to it and to know that it must be sincere, genuine and costly if it is to pass that ordeal. What, then, is the expense? What is the cost of building this tower or fighting this war?

The answer is given by our Savior, not by me! I should not have dared to invent such tests as He has ordained! It is for me to be the echo of His voice and no more. What does He say? Why, first, that if you would be His and have His salvation, you must love Him beyond every other person in this world. Is not that the meaning of this expression, If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother? Dear names! Dear names! Father and mother! Lives there a man with soul so dead that he can pronounce either of these words without emotionand especially the last mother? Brothers and Sisters, this is a dear and tender name to usit touches a chord which thrills our being! Yet far more powerful is the name of Savior, the name of Jesus!

Father and mother must be less loved than Jesus Christ! The Lord demands precedence, also, of the best beloved wife. Here he touches another set of heart-strings. Dear is that word, wife, partner of our being, comfort of our sorrow, delight of our eyeswife! Yet, Wife, you must not take the chief place. You must sit at Jesus feet, or else you are an idol, and Jesus will not allow your rivalry. And children, the dear babes that nestle in your bosom and clamber to your knee and pronounce your name in accents of musicthey must not be our chief lovethey must not come in between us and the Savior. Nor, for their sakes, to give them pleasure or to promote their worldly advantage, must we grieve our Lord.

Many a son is master of his father. Many a daughter has been mistress to the mother. But if it is for evil, this must be ended at once! If they tempt us to evil they must be treated as if we hated themyes, the evil in them must be hated for Christs sake! If you are Christs disciples your Lord must be first, then mother, father, wife, children, brothers, and sisters will follow in due rank and order. I am afraid that many professors are not prepared for this. They would be Christians if their family would approve, but they must consult their brother, father, or wife. They would make a stand against worldly pleasures if others would, but they cannot bear to appear singular, or to oppose the views of relatives.

They say, My father wishes it and I dare not tell him that it is wrong My mother says that we must not be too strait-laced and therefore, though my conscience tells me it is wrong, yet will I do it. Or else they say, My girls are growing up and must have amusement. My boys must be allowed their pleasures and therefore I must wink at sin. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, this must not be if you are, indeed, Christs disciples! You must put them all asidethe dearest must go sooner than Jesus be forsaken! Does He not say in the Psalms, Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your fathers house; so shall the King greatly desire your beauty: for he is your Lord; and worship you Him?

Mark you, you will best prove your love to your relatives by being decided for the right, since you will be the more likely to win their souls. Love them too much to indulge the wrong in them! Love them so truly that you hate that in them which would injure you and ruin them! You must be prepared to suffer from those who are bound to you by the dearest ties. Sin must not be tolerated whatever may happen. We cannot yield in the point of sinour determination is invinciblecome hate or come love, we must follow Christ!

The next item of cost is this self must be hated. I am afraid there are some who would sooner hate father or wife than hate their own life. Yet such is the command. It means thisthat when my own pleasure, or my own gain, or my own reputation, or even my own life shall come in the way of Christs Glory, I am too little to make any account of myselfthat I must even hate myself if self shall stand in the way of Christ! I am to look upon father, mother, brother, sister and myself, also, as foes, so far as they are opposed to the Lord Jesus and His holy will! I am to love them and desire their good as I also desire good for myself, but I am not to desire any good for them or for myself at the cost of sinning and robbing the Lord Jesus of His Glory. As for myself, if I see anything in myself opposed to Jesus I must do away with it. I must mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, denying myself anything and everything which would grieve the Savior, or would prevent my realizing perfect conformity to Him.

Next, the Savior goes on to say that if we would follow Him we must bear our crossWhoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. Sometimes that cross comes in the shape of confessing our faith before gainsayers. Ah, says the timid heart, if I do so I shall have all my friends against me. Take up your cross! It is a part of the cost of true discipleship. I shall scarcely be able to bear myself in the house if I avow my religion. Take up your cross! My Brother, unless you do, you cannot be Christs disciple. Well, but it will involve a change even in my daily life. Make the change, my Brother, or you cannot be the Lords disciple.

But I know there is one very dear whom I have looked upon as likely to be my future companionand he will leave me if I forsake the ways of the world. Then, heavy as the loss may be, let him go, my Sister, if it is so that you cannot follow Christ and unite with Him. You must follow Jesus, or be lost forever! What trying words these are! What detectors of the hypocrisy of many professing Christians! Did they ever separate from the world? No, not theythey fell in with its fashions as the dead fish floats with the current! Have they any cross to bear? Does anybody reproach them with being too rigid, and too puritanical? Oh, no! For theirs is the religion which the world praises and consequently the religion which God abhors! If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him and he who has the smile of the ungodly must look for the frown of God! But, more than this, the Savior, as another item of cost, requires that

His disciple should take up his cross and come after Him, that is to say, he must act as Christ acted. If we are not prepared to make Christ our example, yes, if it is not our highest ambition to live as He lived, to give ourselves up to act as He did, we cannot be His disciples. Last of all, we must make an unreserved surrender of all to Jesus. Listen to these words: Whoever he is of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be My disciple. It may yet come to this, that persecution may arise and you may actually have to give up all! You must be prepared for the event. You may not have to give up anything, but the surrender must be just as real in your heart as if it had to be carried out in act and deed. No man has truly given himself to Christ unless he has also said, My Lord, I give to You this day my body, my soul, my powers, my talents, my goods, my house, my children and all that I have. Henceforth I will hold them at Your will, as a steward under You. Yours they areas for me, I have nothingI have surrendered all to You.

You cannot be Christs disciples at any less expense than thisif you possess a farthing that is your own and not your Masters, Christ is not your Master! It must be all His, every single jot and tittleand your life, alsoor you cannot be His. These are very searching words, but I would remind you, once again, that they are not mine. If, in expounding them I have erred, I am grieved that it should be so. But I am persuaded I have not erred on the side of too much severity. I confess I may have spoken too leniently. The words of the text lay the axe to the root and are sweeping to the last degree.

Oh, count, then, the cost! And if any of you have taken up a religion which costs you nothing, put it down and flee from it, for it will be your curse and your ruin! Is there any getting to Heaven without this cost? No! But may we not be Christians without these sacrifices? You may be counterfeits, you may be hypocrites, you may be brothers and sisters of Judas, but you cannot be real Christians! This cost is unavoidable, it cannot be bated one solitary mite. God grant that you may be enabled to submit to it.

II. The second head is this, WISDOM SUGGESTS THAT WE SHOULD COUNT THE COST. You feel you would like to be a Christian. Dear Friend, give me your hand. I am glad you have such a desire. But as I grasp your hand and would gladly draw you towards Christ, I look you in the face and say, Do you know what you desire? Are you sure you desire it? There are men lying on beds of sickness who cry for help, but when they recover and have to go out and battle with the world, the time may come when they will say, I would just as soon be on the bed of sickness again. I should not like a time to come when any one of you shall say, I joined the Church, but it was a mistake. I did not weigh the matter rightly. I am now in for it, and I am sorry I am, for I ought not to be where I am.

If honest, you ought to give up your profession, if such is the case. If you have no Divine Grace, I hope you will have enough of common honesty not to stick to a practical falsehood. I should grieve, indeed, if that should happen, and therefore this morning, I pray you, count the coat! For mark, if you do not count the cost, you will not be able to carry out your resolves. It is a great building. It is a great war! No mistake can be greater than the notion that in order to be a Christian there is only needed a measure of emotion during a few daysand the belief of some one decisive hour! If I preached such doctrines I should be deceiving your souls!

Faith and repentance are not the work of a week or two, they are a lifework! As long as the Christian is on earth he must repent. And as for faith, it is not saying, I believe in Jesus, and therefore I am saved, but it is a daily Grace, the trust of a lifetime. The Christian continues, still, to believe and repent until he commences to triumph in eternal Glory. Moreover, faith is continually productive of sanctifying results upon the life of the Believer, or otherwise he is not possessed of the right faith. He who believes in Jesus Christ is savedbut if there were such a thing as a temporary faith there would be such a thing as a temporary salvation. He who truly repents of sin is a renewed man, but if repentance of sin were only a transient thing and were soon over, the life which it indicated would be over, too. You must not be content with false and fleeting religion! You are beginning to build a tower of which the top stone will never be laid till you are taken up to Heavenand you are commencing a war which will never end till you exchange the sword for the palm branch.

Remember, also, that to fail in this great enterprise will involve terrible defeat, for what does our Lord say? He says that not to be able to finish will expose you to ridicule. I beg you to notice the form of that ridicule. All that pass by will begin to mock him, saying one to the other (for that is the force of the expression) this man began to build but was not able to finish. Our Lord does not represent them as saying to the foolish builder, You began to build and were not able to finish, but as speaking about him as a third personThis man. Now, half-hearted Christians, halfhearted religious men may not be scoffed at in the public streets to their faces, but they are common butts of ridicule behind their backs. You false professors are universally despised! Worldlings laughingly say, Ah, these are pretty specimens of Church members!

The world looks upon a worldly church with utter disdain, and for my part, little do I regret that such derision is poured upon an object which so well deserves it! To be a mere pretender to Christian discipleship is to become an object of scorn in time and in eternity. And such will be the false professors fate. Sir, if you mean to be a Christian, resolve that it shall be the right thing, thorough and decidedfor then, though men will not go about and praise you to your face, they will honor youand even those who hate you will know your value. But if you are only half a Christian and not thorough, they may not come to your face and show their contempt, but as they pass by they will sneer and will have more respect for a downright worldling than for youbecause he is what he says he is, and makes no pretence of being anything else! But as for you, you began to build and could not finish.

What a wretched object is a sham Christian! We have sometimes seen great buildings which have been commenced and deserted by overspeculative persons. The neighbors have called them Smithys Folly, or

Browns Folly, or Robinsons Folly, or the like. These are but fleeting causes of derision. But the pretender, the man who, in appearance, commenced to be a Christian and then broke down at it, will be pointed at even by the lost in Hell! The drunkard will cry, And you? Have

you, also, come here? You who were so eloquent about sobriety, and so ready to rebuke the tippler. Aha! cries another, you are the man who lived down our street and made so much show of your religion! You told me I was very wicked, but are you better off than I am?

Behold, I see the openly profane raise themselves up from their racks of remorse to exclaim, Have you become like one of us? You Churchmember, are you, too, in Hell? Is the taste of the sacramental wine still upon your lips? Why, then, do you demand a drop of water to cool your tongue? That sacramental bread which you did swallow so readily, does it not even now stick in your hypocritical throat? You liar before God and man! It is meet and right that you are cast out even as we. Oh, if you must be lost, be lost as anything but hypocrites! If you must perish, perish rather outside the Church than in it! Do not mock the Lord of Glory! I know of no worse act than to mimic the excellences of the Savior with bold imitation of His Graces! What worse offense can you render to the Majesty of His sacred virtue than to travesty His holiness and mock His perfection?

III. The last word shall be this, that COST WHATEVER IT MAY, TRUE RELIGION IS WORTH THE COST. We are like a man with the black pest upon him who knows that he is dying and yet yonder is a drug which will heal him. Physician, says he, you ask so great a price that each drop costs me a diamond! You are demanding more than its weight in choicest pearls, but it does not matter, I must have it! If I do not, I am a dead manand then what will it profit me that I have kept my gold? It is the case of every one of us here presentwe must have Christ or perish foreverand it will be better for us to cut off our right arm and pluck out our right eye than that we should be cast into Hell fire!

Mark you, Brothers and Sisters, the present blessings of true religion are worth all the cost. What if I have to rend some fond connection? Jesus, You are better to me than husband, wife, or child. If it must be so that she who lies in my bosom shall count me for her enemy, You shall be in my heart, my Savior, better than a Rachel, or a Rebekah. Yes, if it must be so that my father shall say, You shall never darken my doors again if you follow Christ, he must say it, for when father and mother forsake me the Lord will take me up. The immediate joy will recompense for the immediate loss. Yes, doubtless you may count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord and yet remain a gainer.

And again, what recompense comes for all cost in the consolation afforded by true godliness in the article of death? To lie a-dyingwhy it will give no pain to be able to say, then, I was cast out of any family for Jesus. It will be no sorrow to remember, I was ridiculed for Christ. It will cause us no pangs to say, I was counted too precise and too much of a Puritan. No, my Brothers and Sisters, those are not the things which put thorns into death pillows. Oh, no! There we shall see how sweet it was to have borne any part of Jesus Crossa sliver of His Cross will be worth a kings ransom on a dying day! Moreover, at the Judgment, when the trumpet rings out and the dead are rising, we shall not say, I suffered too much for Christ.

When to the right His chosen go, and we among them, we shall not look back with regret to the fact that we lost caste in society and position among the refined for Jesus sake! We shall not lament that we attended a despised conventicle and worshipped among the poor of this world out of love to Jesus, and fidelity to His Gospel. Oh, no! I guarantee you in that day he shall shine brightest who was most beclouded for his Lords sake! Midst the bright ones, doubly bright shall be the martyr band of whom the world was not worthywho were accounted as the offscouring of all things! And while each one of the disciples shall receive a hundredfold for all he may have given up for his Lords cause, these shall have the fairest portion.

Moreover, let me remind you, Beloved, that Christ asks you to give up nothing that will injure you. If you must hate father and mother it is only in this sensethat you will not yield to their wrong requests, nor will you leave Christ for them. If you must give up any pleasure it is because it is not a fitting pleasure for youit is poisonous sugar of leadand not true sweetness. Christ will give you greater enjoyments by far. I remember that our Redeemer does not ask any one of us to do what He has not done Himself. That thought pierces me to the quickI wish it might affect you, also. Master, do You say, give up my father? Did You not leave Your Father? Do You bid me even leave my fathers house if it must be for Your sake?

Did You not leave the glorious mansions of Heaven? What if I am called to bear reproach? They called the Master of the house Beelzebub! What if I am cast out? They also cast You out. When we think of the scourging, the shame and the spitting which the Lord endured, what are our griefs? And if, for His sake, we should even be condemned to death we know how He hung on the Cross, stripped of His all, that He might save us from the wrath to come! O Believer, can you follow your Lord where ever He goes? Soldiers of the Cross, can you follow Him? Is the path smooth enough for those dear feet and too rough for you? There He is in the center of the battle where the blows fall fastestwill you follow Him? Dare you follow Him, or do you pine for the tents of ease and the soft couches of the cowards, yonder, who are shrinking back and deserting to the enemy?

Oh, by everything that is good, if you are, indeed, His followers, I charge you, cry, Where He is, there let His servant be! As He fares, so let His servant farein this world let His humiliation be ours so that in the world to come we may be partakers of His Glory. This is strong preaching, you tell me, but the Savior meant all that I have said. His was a testing discourse, but there are Truths of God to be remembered which may console us while hearing them. It is true that you cannot build the towerJoshua said to the people in his timeYou cannot serve the

Lord. If you have counted the cost, you know, by this time, that you cannot wage the war. Ten thousand cannot stand against twenty thousand. But yet it must be done, inevitable necessity drives on behind whatever may be in frontwe dare not turn back.

Remember Lots wife. What, then, must we do? Hear the Lords words, With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Are you willing? Then the Spirit of God will help you! You shall give up the world and the flesh without a sigh! You shall fight against your lusts and you shall overcome them through the blood of the Lamb! The tower shall be built and the Lord shall inhabit it! Cast yourselves on Jesus by a simple faithrest in His powerand from day to day believe in His strength, and He will bear you safely through!

Do you notice the verse which follows this passage? I wonder whether anything like it will follow my sermon. It is astonishing that though Jesus thundered out as from the top of Sinai and His words seemed harsh, yet it is written, Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him, as if they said to themselves, This man tells us the Truth of God, therefore we will hear Him. And then He began to tell them the precious Truths of His Free Grace, acting just as the farmer does who puts in the plow and turns up the soilwhen he sees the clods breaking in the furrow, then he scatters the golden seedbut not till then.

Listen, every one of you who would have Christ! Come, and have Him! You who would have salvation, accept it as the gift of His Sovereign Grace! But do not receive it under misapprehensionunderstand what is meant by it. Salvation is not deliverance from Hell, aloneit is deliverance from sin! It is not the rescue of men, merely from eternal painit is their redemption from this worlds vain and wicked ways! It cannot be divided! It is a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. If you would have justification, you must have sanctification! If you would have pardon, you must have holiness! It you would be one with Christ, you must be separate from sinners. If you would walk the streets of gold above, you must walk the road of holiness below! God grant you His Holy Spirit to enable you to do so and His shall be the praise forever! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Psalm 103; Luke 14:25-35.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK906, 671, 596

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CONSIDER BEFORE YOU FIGHT

NO. 632

**A SERMON PREACHED   
BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**What king, going to make war against another king, sits not down first and consults whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation**

**and desires conditions of peace.   
Luke 14:31, 32.**

EVERY sensible man endeavors to adapt his purposes to his strengths. He does not begin to build a house which he will not be able to finish, nor commence a war which he cannot hope to fight through. The religion of Christ is the most reasonable one in the world and Jesus Christ never desires to have any disciples who shall blindly follow Him without counting the cost. We always esteem it to be a happy thing when we can get men to sit down and consider. The most of you are so full of other thoughts and so occupied with the worldever running here and there about your ordinary businessthat we cannot get you to think, or calmly sit down and soberly look at things in the light of eternity and weigh them deliberately as you ought.

And yet it is only reasonable that the Master should ask you to do for Him, with regard to your spiritual matters, what you will admit that every sensible man does continually in his business! You are poor traders if you never count your stock. You are likely to be, before long, in bankruptcy court if there is no periodical examination of accounts. And so Christ would have you sit down, sometimes, and take stock as to where you are, and what you are. And then figure up by some sort of arithmetic by which you may come to a truthful calculation, what you are able to do and not to do. And what, therefore, it is reasonable and unreasonable for you to undertake and where your position ought and where it ought not to be.

I especially invite, this evening, those who are unconverted in this assembly to some few thoughts upon the war in which they are engaged with God. I am hoping that perhaps if they consider a little upon it, they will send a delegation and desire peace. When I have spoken upon that, there will be some, perhaps, who will he running away with the idea that they will at once be at peace with God and make war with Satan. But I shall want to pin them down a moment and make them estimate their chances of victory in such a war as that and see whether they are able to meet the Black Prince of Darkness in their own strength.

We will try, if we can, to make it tonight the subject of a little homely talk about our souls and a little earnest personal consideration about our future.   
I. First, then, THERE ARE SOME HERE WHO ARE NOT THE FRIENDS

OF GOD, and in this case he that is not with Him is against Him. If you cannot look up to God and say, My Father, and feel that your heart beats true to Him, then remember it is a fact that you are His enemy. If you could have what you wish there would be no God. If it were in your power you would never trouble yourself again with thoughts of Him. You would like to live, you say, as you wish, and I know how you would wish to live. It would be anyway but as God commands.

Now, as you are engaged in antagonism with Him, just think awhile Can you expect to succeed? Are you likely to win the day? You have entered into a conflict with His Lawyou do not intend to keep it. With His day, you do not regard it. You are thus at war with God! Now, is it likely that you will be successful? Is there a chance for you? If there is, why then, perhaps, it may be as well to go on. If you can conquer GOD, if the battlements of Glory may yet see the flag of sin waved triumphant there, why, Man, then try it!

There will be at least an ambition worthy of Satan who desired sooner to reign in Hell than to be ruled by Heaven! But is there any hope for you? Let me put a few things before you which may, perhaps, make you think the conflict too unequal and thus lead you to abandon the thought at once. Think of Gods stupendous power! What is there which He cannot do? We see but little of Gods power comparatively in our land. Now and then there comes a crash of thunder in a storm and we look up with amazement when He sets the heavens on blaze with His lightning.

But go and do business on the deep waters. Let your vessel fly before the howling hurricane! Mark how every staunch timber seems to crack as though it were but match board and the steady mast goes by the board and snaps and is broken to shivers. Mark what God does when He stirs up the great deep and seems to bring Heaven down and lift the earth up till the elements mingle in a common mass of tempest!

Then go to the Alps and listen to the thunder of the avalanche. Stand amazed as you look down some grim precipice, or peer with awe-struck wonder into the blue mysteries of a crevasse! See the leaping waterfalls and mark those frozen seas, the glaciers, as they come sweeping down the mountain side. Stay awhile till a storm shall gather there and Alp shall talk to Alp and those white prophetic heads shall seem to bow while the wings of tempest cover them! There you may learn something of the power of God amidst the crash of Nature.

If you could have stood by the side of Dr. Woolfe, when rising early one morning, he went out of Aleppo and upon turning his head saw that Aleppo was no more! It had been, in a single moment, swallowed up by an earthquake! Then again you might see what God can do. But why need I feebly recapitulate what you all know so well? Think of what that Book records of His deeds of prowess when He unloosed the depths and bade the fountains of the great deep be broken upand the whole world that then waswas covered with water!

Think of what He did at the Red Sea when the depths stood upright as an heap for a time while His people went through and when afterwards, with eager joy, the floods clasped their hands and buried His enemies in the deep, never to rise again! Let such names as Og, king of Bashan, Sihon, king of the Amorites and Sennacherib, the mighty, rise before your recollection and mark what God has done! Who has ever dashed upon the bosses of His buckler without being wounded? What iron has He not broken? What spear has He not shivered?

Millions came against Him, but by the blast of the breath of His nostrils they fell, or they flew like the chaff before the wind! Let the sea roar but the rocks stand still and hurl off the waves in flakes of foamand so does God when His foes are most enraged and passionate. He that sits in the heavens does laugh. The Lord does have them in derision. And He breaks them in pieces without a stroke of His hand or even the glance of His eyes. Think, Sinner! Think of Him with whom you contend!

Have you an arm like Gods? Can you thunder with a voice like His? Can you stamp with your foot and shake the mountains? Can you touch the hills and make them smoke? Can you say to the sea, Be stirred to your depths, or can you call to the winds and bid the steeds of tempest be unloosed? If you cannot, then think of the battle! Attempt to do no more but get back to your bed and there commune with your heart and make your peace with Him against whom you can not hope to contend successfully.

Think, again, O rebellious Manyou have to deal not only with almighty, but with an ever encompassing power! Please think how much you are in Gods power tonight as it regards your temporal position. You are prospering in businessbut the tide of prosperity may be turned in a way unknown to you. God has a thousand ways of stripping those whom He before seemed to clothe most lavishly. You dote upon that wife of yoursshe may be struck before your eyes and waste with consumption or decline, or, more rapidly still, she may be taken from you at a stroke! And then where is your joy?

Those children, those happy prattlers who make your hearth glad could you hold them for a moment if God should call back their spirits? If He said, Return, children of men, your prayers, the physician, your lovewhat could all these avail you? You have but to buy the coffin and the shroud and the grave and bury your dead out of your sight. God can sweep away all if He wills, and leave you penniless, childless, a widower, without comfort in the world. I would not contend with Him who has so many ways to wound me! I am vulnerable at so many points and He knows how to pierce me to the quick in them all.

I will, therefore, make Him my friend rather than my foe. I had better not fight with Him who has the key of the castle and of the front gate and of the iron gate and who can storm every position along my bastion whenever He shall please. Think, again, how much you are personally in His hands! You are strong, you sayyou will do a days work with any man. There are few can lift a load more readily than you can, perhaps, and yet one second would be enough to paralyze every limb!

Your faculties are clear. You can write with clearnessno one can see through an intricate account more rapidly than you can, or find out a secret more speedily. And yet one tick of that clock is time enough to re

duce either you or me to a driveling idiot, or to a raving madman. A mysterious hand falls on that brain and cools it so that there is no longer the light of intellect within itor else an awful breath fans its flame till it burns like Nebuchadnezzars furnace and the soul walks within it a martyrdoomed to live in the midst of fire!

Think of thisnot many yards from here there stands in Bedlam an awful proof of what the Providence of God can do in one moment with those who seemed the most sane, the most witty, and the most able of men. And you have not to go far in either direction, before, at the gate of some hospital, you will find how soon the body may become very, very low, even to the dust, if God but wills it. I would not, O Sinner, I would not have God other than my friend, while I am thus helplessly in His control!

If the moth is in my hand and I can crush it at my will and pleasure, surely if that moth had wit and sense, it would not provoke me to anger nor seek to bring down my plagues upon it! But, if it could, it would seek to nestle near my heart, that I, so able to crush it, might use my power for its protection and might make what wit I have to be its wisdom for its shelter and defense. It is well, also, to remember the mighty army of the Lord of Hosts and that you live amidst the creatures of God who are all ready to do His bidding.

As the children of Israel journeyed in the wilderness, they were preserved by God from many foes and innumerable dangers which lurked around waiting to destroy them. Once God gave the fiery serpents permission to assault the host and what death and terror immediately filled the camp! They must have seen, then, that it was no small thing to be at variance with God, when He had so many allies waiting to do His bidding. How clearly this was shown in the plagues of Egypt, when frogs, locusts and lice, hail and fire, plague and death flooded the ill-fated landbut only when beckoned on by the uplifted finger of God!

He can still call to His help the forces of creation. The stars in their courses fought against Sisera and God can still make all things work for evil as well as good if He is pleased to command them. When Herod fought with God he was consumed by worms and diedand God has still a countless army of servants who do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word. You had better wait awhile and think how you can meet them. Are your friends as numerous? Can you muster an army like Gods? Is the muster roll of your hosts like His?

Consider the heavens, for He marshals yon starry multitude and calls them all by name! Because He is great in strength, not one fails. Be wise and enter into covenant with Him through blood and rush not on to certain defeat by seeking to outrival God. Remember, moreover, what is the extent of Gods wisdom and that His foolishness is greater than your highest knowledge. A good general is worth more than a regiment of men. When Stonewall Jackson was killed, his enemies and friends alike felt that his death was more than the loss of ten thousand men.

Our Iron Duke, when alive, was a strength to our army beyond all calculation. Now mark the skill and infinite wisdom of the God who leads the army of the skies. All light and knowledge are His. He is the Ancient of Days and His experience runs back to all eternity. You are but of yesterday and know nothing. His plans are beyond your conception, and He knows the way you take. He is far above your thoughts and ever out of your sightbut He can see you through and through and knows you better than you know yourself. Do not show your folly by weighing your wisdom against His in the scales, or by expecting to outshine Him so as to triumph over Him. Poor moth rushing into the flame, you will be consumed amidst the pity of good men and the derision of evil ones.

Yet there is another matter I want you to rememberyou that are the enemies of Godyou have a conscience. You have not got rid of it yet. You have a thief in that candle of the Lord, it is true, but still it is a light. It is not put out. And God has ways of making it to become a terrible plague to you, if you do not accept it as a friend. Conscience is meant to be mans armor bearer, beneath whose shield he may fight the battles of the right. But if you make it your enemy, then conscience often places a sword in such a way as to cut and wound you severely.

You have a conscience and that is a very awkward thing for a man to have who is an enemy of God. If I were Gods enemy I should prefer having no monitor to call my attention to the holy Character and righteous Law of the Most High. I should be glad to get rid of every particle of moral sense. But you have consciences and most of you are not yet dead to all feeling of guilt and shame. You cannot, therefore, sin so cheaply as others. And if you do for the present manage to put Mr. Conscience down, yet since he is still in you, the time will come when you will find his voice grow louder! And there will be a terror in that voice which will make it a terror for you to sleep and hard for you to go about your daily business with your accustomed regularity.

Those men who serve God most faithfully find that their conscience, when it can accuse them of anything wrongthough it is their best friendis no very pleasant companion. It is said that Davids heart smote him. I would sooner have anybody smite me than my own heart, for it strikes with so hard a blow and hits the place where one may most tenderly feel it. And it will be so with you unless you get your conscience seared with a hot iron. I am afraid there will come a time when you will not rest in your beds nor be able to find peace or satisfaction anywhere. I think therefore, if I had a friend of God inside my heart, I would not like to fight with God so long as he continued within me. Oh, that you would be at peace with Him, and thereby good shall come unto you.

One other reflectionfor I must not keep you thinking on this point longit is this. Remember you must die, and therefore it is a pity to be at enmity with God. You may put it off and say, I shall not die yet. But you do not know. How can you tell? It is possible that you may die tomorrow. But suppose that you live for the next twenty or thirty years? What is that? I am only thirty years of age and yet I confess that I never thought time so short as I feel it to be now. When we were children we thought twelve months was a great length of time. When we were twenty, a year

seemed to be a very respectable period.

But now it flies and some of my friends here whose hair is turning grey will tell you that whether it is fifty, sixty, or seventy years, it all seems but a mere dreama snap of the fingersit is gone so soon! Well, just push through a little interval of time, then you must die. My dear Friend, will it not be a very dreadful thing to die when you are at war with God? If you could fight this out forever under such circumstances as those in which you now are, I could not then commend the struggle. But since it must come to such an awful pause! Since there must be that death rattle in your throat! Since there must be that clammy sweat upon your browO you will need some better business than to be carrying arms against the God of Heaven in your dying moments!

They that have God for their friend yet find death no very pleasant task. But what will you find it, who will have to strike yourselves in every blow that you are aiming against the Most High, whom you have made and continue to make your enemy? Here is this, too, to think ofthere is a future state. When you die, you have to live again! We know very little about that next state and I do not intend to say much about it tonight. You are launched without your body, an unclothed spirit, into a world which you have never seen. Will you find companions there, or will you be alone? Where will it be? What sort of place will it be like?

I should not choose to enter upon the realm of spirits without having God to be my friend. It would be a dreadful thing to get into that mysterious unknown country having nothing to take with me across its boundary except thisan inveterate enmity to the King that reigns supreme in it! If I must cross the border and go into a land I have never trod, I would like, at least, to carry a passport with meor to be able to say, I am a friend of the King that reigns here. But to go there as Gods enemyhow terrible it must be!

Besides, let me say, you cannot hope to succeedall experience is against you. There never was one yet that either in this state or the next has fought with God and conquered. And you will not be the first, for they who contend with God all come to this one conclusionHe comes forth in His strength and His enemies are given like stubble to the fire and like wax to the flame. He lifts up His voice and they melt away. He looks at them and that one flash of fire withers them forever. And out of the bottomless pit of despair they weep and wail the piteous but useless regret that their harvest is past and their summer is ended and they are not saved. For they have spent their strength against their God and so have brought themselves where ruin is eternal and hope can never come.

Oh that you would send a delegation and be at peace! I think I hear some say, Well, we wish to give up the contestbut what is to be done so as to be at peace with God? I ask, Have you got an ambassador to go to God for you? That is the first thing. He cannot look at you. Jesus Christ is the Ambassador between God and mancan you commit your case into His hands? Will you do so? If so, your case will go well. God cannot deny Him any request. He has a right to all He ever asks the Father to give and the Father is always well-pleased in Him and delights to grant Him whatever He desires.

That Savior is willing to plead your cause. He waits to be gracious. I am sent to tell you the good news of His love and mercyto warn you of the certain doom which awaits all who turn from Christand to bid you and every sin-sick rebel to come at once, just as you are, to the footstool of mercy. And I can pledge the honor of God, (as being Christs ambassador for this purpose), that if you come, He will in no wise cast you out. And the terms of peace are very brief. They are thesegive up the traitors. There can be no peace between you and God while you harbor sin. Give them up and be willing to renounce every sin of every sort and kind, for one harbored traitor will prevent God concluding peace with you.

Sinner, what do you say? Is it hard to give up your sin? Does that condition strike you as unreasonable? Out with the knife, man, and cut the throat of every iniquity! Why, there is no sin for which it is worth your while to be damned! A little rioting and chambering and wantonnessis that worth Hell fire forever? What? To have your giddy amusements for an hour or twois this a due recompense for an eternity of fire unmitigated by a drop of water? I pray you, be reasonable. Barter not away your soul for trifles! Pawn not eternity for the mere fictions of an instant. God give you Grace, Sinner, to not kick at that condition, but at once cast out your enemies and gods and then lay hold on Christ, on Jesus Christ alone and let Him stand as Ambassador for you. You can not fight it out. Let peace be made. Oh may it be made tonight, through the blood of Jesus Christ, Gods dear Son.

Then next, confess that you deserve the Kings wrath. Bow that head put the rope about your neck as though you felt you deserved that the executioner should lead you forth. Pray to God for pardon and cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner! And then cling to the skirts of that appointed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who on yonder bloody tree made expiation for the sins of Gods enemies that they might thereby become Gods friends. God demands of you a confession of your guilt. He will be honored by your humbling yourself before Him. Your sin has aimed at His Glory and now He will glorify Himself by your repentance.

It were only just on His part if He spurned you away and cast you out into the pit which has no bottom. But He has said that whoever confesses his sin shall obtain forgiveness. Go, therefore, in the spirit of the publicansmite upon your breast and say, God be merciful to me a sinner. Confess that you deserve Hell but ask for Heaven and you shall not plead in vain. Only honor Gods justice and appeal to His mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ. This, surely, is not much for God to expect at your hands!

If you will not submit, what can you say when God shall crush you? You refuse to bend the knee and to bow the headwhat will you do when God shall trample on you in His fury and tread on you in His hot displeasure? You must, therefore, now in the accepted time, while it is still the day of mercy, seek His face and with weeping and supplication, take with you words and turn unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon you.

And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

II. And now we turn the subject so as to look at THE SECOND CONTEST, IN WHICH I TRUST MANY ARE ANXIOUS TO BE ENGAGED. Some young spirit that has been touched with a sense of its own condition, and somewhat aroused, may be saying, I will be Gods enemy no longerI will be His friend. Bowing the knee, that heart cries, Oh God, reconcile me unto Yourself by the death of Your dear Son. I throw down all my weapons. I confess my guilt. I plead for mercy. For Jesus sake vouchsafe it to me. But, says that soul, if I am the friend of God, I must be the foe of Satan and from this day I pledge myself to fight forever with Satan till I get the victory and am free from sin.

My dear Friend, I want you to stop. I do not wish you to make peace with the Evil One, but I want you to consider what you are doing. There are a few things I would whisper in your ear, and one is that sin is sweet. The uppermost drops of sins cup glitter and sparkle. There is pleasure in sin of a certain sort and for a certain season. It is a poisoned sweetit is but a temporary delusionbut still the world does promise fair things. Its gingerbread is gilt and though it wears nothing but tinsel and a little goldleaf now and then, yet it does look very much like gold.

Can you? Can you resist sin, when it seems so charming? The next time the cup is brought to youyou know the flavor of itoh, it is rich! Can you turn away? Are you certain that you will be able to dash it from your lips? Ah, Man, you will find it different, when the trial comes, to what it is now that you are sitting in the Tabernacle and resolving to get rid of the temptation and that you will do right!

Remember, again, you may be enticed by friends who will be very persuasive. You can give up sin just now, but you do not know who may be the tempter at some future time. If she should allure you, who has tempted so well before! If sheshe should speak! She! The very word has awakened your recollectionif she should speak as she alone can speak and look as only she can lookcan you then resist and stand back? That witching voice, that fascinating eye! Oh how many souls have been damned for what men call love! Oh that they had but a little true love of themselves and others, and would not thus pander to the Prince of Hell!

But alas, alas, while the cup itself looks sweet, there is to be added to it the hand that holds it out. It is not so easy to contend with Satan when he employs the service of someone whom you esteem highly and love with all your heart. Remember the case of Solomon whose wisdom was marvelous, but who was enticed by his wives and fell a prey into the hands of the Evil One. It needs a spirit like the Masters to be able to say, Get you behind me, Satan, to the tempter, when he has the appearance of one of your best loved friends.

The devil is a crafty being and if he cannot force the door, he will try and get the key which fits the lock and, by the means of our most tender love and affections, will make a way for himself into our hearts! You will find it no easy task, therefore, to contend with him. Then again, remember, Man, there is habit. Can you, all of a sudden, give up your sins and fight Satan? Do not tell me that you can! Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? If so, then he that is accustomed to do evil may learn to do well.

If you had never sinned as you have sinned, there were not this difficulty with you. But he that has gone day after day and year after year into sin is not so easily turned from it. As well hope to make Niagara leap up instead of down as make human nature flow back to virtue instead of going downward to sin! You do not know yourself. Habit is an iron bond and he that is once enveloped in it may pull and strain but he will tear away his flesh sooner than break the links of that dread chain.

We have seen men who, convinced of the error of their ways, have sought to turn from them without asking the help of God. For a time they have made some little progress in appearance, but it has only been like the retreating of the waves at the rising of the tide. Their evil habits have returned upon them with a rush and have covered them deeper than before. Read the parable of our Lord concerning the unclean spirit which went out of the man and roamed through dry places, seeking rest but finding none. Finally it said, I will return to the place from where I went out. It came back and found it swept and garnished and then took to it seven other evil spirits, more wicked than itself. So the last end of that man was worse than the first.

Thus it is with those who enter upon the work of saving themselves without looking up by faith to God for His needed help. Satan will triumph over you. You are like the fly in the coils of the spiders webthe more it struggles, the more it will be encompassed. You must cry for help as you are quite unable of yourself to escape from the snares of the Wicked One. He has you bound fast, hand and footand you will never break his cords nor be able to cast his bands from you. You have not seven locks of strength like Samson! You will certainly be overcome.

Again, you think you will give up sin, but ridicule is very unpleasant and when the finger comes to be pointed at you and they say, Ah, so you have set up for a saint, I see! When they put it as only they can put it, in such a sharp, cutting, grating manner! When it is wrapped up so wittily in an epigram that is told all round the shop against you! And when, moreover, there is some weakness of yours, some giddy weaknessand they know how to hook your attempt at saintship to your weaknessand they bandy that all round and there are fifty laughing faces at you, can you stand that?

Yes, it is a very pretty thing for you to come here on Sundays and say what you will dobut it is different to do it on Mondays. To be laughed at is not really, to a sensible man, anything very terrible. I think you have only to get used to it and then you will just as much expect to hear people laugh at you as to hear birds singing when you walk out in the morning! But at first it is a very sharp triala trial of cruel mocking. And many who have been going to fight Satan have drawn back, for they found they could not stand it.

When the Jews were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after their return from captivity, one of the most severe tests of their zeal and devotion was the laughter of their enemies who came and looked on and said, What

are these feeble Jews doing? Even that which they build, if a fox goes up it, he shall break down their stone wall. The words of their foes were more cutting than swords and keenly did they feel in their spirits the derision of the scoffers. It is as painful now for the sensitive spirit as it was of old, but you must not be daunted. Heaven is worth buying, even though it should cost a life heaped full of stinging words and malicious sayings from a deriding and taunting world.

Did not Christ Himself show us how to endure this trial? See His foes gathered around Him when He hung dying on the Cross. They laugh at Him even thereHe saved others, Himself He cannot save, they said as they wagged their heads and mocked alike His dignity and His woe. If You are the Christ, come down from the Cross and we will believe on You. These sayings must have been more bitter to His spirit than the wormwood mingled with gall was to His lips. You must follow Christ here, also, if you would contend, as He did, with Satan.

Then count the cost. Can you drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism? And yet further, let me say to you, you that are for going to Heaven so zealouslygain is a very pretty thing, a very pleasant affair. Who does not like to make money? You know if you can be religious and grow rich at the same time, that will just suit some of you! Oh yes, the two going togetherthat will be admirable! You will kill two birds with one stone. Mr. By-Ends said, Now, if a man, by being religious can get a good wife who has a considerable sum of money. And if by being religious he gets a good shop and many customers, why, says he, then religion is a good thing! To get a good wife is a good thing and to get customersthat is another good thing, and so, he says, the whole is a good thing put together.

But he that knows Mr. By-Ends knows that he is an old rogue, notwithstanding that he puts it prettily. I have known him. He is a member of this Church, I am sorry to say. I never went into a Church where he was not a member. I have tried to turn him out and did once, but there was another one of the family left inside and however many you may expel there are sure to be more of that breed remaining. But there sometimes comes a pinch with Mr. By-Ends. Now if you should find that shutting up your shop on Sundays should ruin your business, well, what then? Could you stand it?

Now there are some of you that try it every now and then when you get spasmodically godly, but it does not pay you, you find. And so you begin once more to open shop on the Lords Day. Some of you Sunday traders discover that it gets a little hot and strong for you when you come to the Tabernacle occasionally and you shut up for a season, but soon you say, Well, people must live. Yes, and people must die and people must be damned, too, if they try to live by breaking Gods Laws!

Remember that it will not pay to be religious, some people fancy. We have heard of a man saying, I cannot afford to keep a conscienceit is too expensive an article for me. Ah, but keep in mind the saying of the Lord, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? There is such a thing as being, Penny wise and pound foolish. And there is such a thing, also, as being, worldly wise and eternally foolish. Think of this, then, for the trial will come to you in the shape of yellow gold and it will be hard to keep yourself from the glittering bait which the god of this world will lay before you.

I am putting these things to you so that you may calculate whether you can carry on the war against the devil with all these fearful odds against you. If I were a recruiting sergeant I should not do this. He puts the shilling into the country lads hand and the lad may say fifty things. Oh never mind, says the gallant soldier, you know, it is all glory, nothing but glory. There, I will just tie these ribbons round your hat. There are some long strips of glory to begin with and then all your days it will be just glory, glory forever. And you will die a general and be buried at Westminster Abbey and they will play the Dead March in Saul, and all that kind of thing.

Now I cannot thus deceive or try to cheat men to enlist under the banner of the Cross. I do not desire to raise objections to it. All I want of you is to count the cost, lest you should be like he who began to build without being able to finish. That is the misery of so many. I advise you, if you are about to declare war with Satan, to see whether you are able to carry it out and win the victory. Well, says one, it is hard to be saved. Nobody ever thought it was not, I hope. What does Peter say? If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

It is hard to be saved, you say. Whoever said it was not? But it is not hard to be saved if a man is willing to be received according to the plan which God has appointed. If Christ undertakes it, then it is done! My counsel to those of you who are considering making war with Satan is to remember that it is too much for you, and therefore do not attempt it in your own strength.

Beware of this. I know Satan will tempt you, first of all, to believe that you need no Savior. Then if you are not convinced of this but are disquieted because of sin, he suggests that you can save yourself. He speaks of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus which flow close by your own door. He says, Wash in these home streams and be clean. Stay where you are and help yourself. But if you listen to the words of the seducer of souls you are lost and undone forever! Can the man born blind see to operate upon his own scale-covered eyes so as to give himself sight? Can the crippled man run away from his lameness and outrun the feebleness of his feet? Can the dead man exert himself to make the life-tide flow once more in his veins and flush his cheek anew with the glow of health?

Can he call back his departed spirit from the shades of the unseen world and make it reoccupy its decaying habitation and bid the marks of the mighty consumer be gone and leave no trace of Deaths conquest behind to remind the returning inhabitant that the palace had been occupied by the ruthless spoiler? We answer, no. A mighty finger must touch and open the eyes. An Omnipotent arm must lift up the paralyzed and impotent man into strength and power. And most evidently, if life is to be secured, the voice of God alone can speak the word which shall make the

dead live.

On this point we wish to be clearly understood. You will never, of yourself, successfully resist sin so as to escape its thralldommuch less can you remove its guilt! The cancer is in your blood and you can never get it out. The black deed is done and it is written, The soul that sins shall die. Oh, then at once ask help of Him who alone can save you from the wrath to come! Remember, poor feeble one, nothing is too hard for God and therefore ask almighty strength to come to your rescue.

It is true you cannot contend with your besetting sinsyour passions, your corruptions of whatever sort they may beare much too strong for you! Old Adam is too mighty for you with your best intentions. But there is a strong One, whose hand, once pierced, is always ready and at the service of every sinner who would have Satan cast out. There is One mighty to save who can come to the rescue and do for you what you cannot do for yourself! Oh that you had Christ tonight, so that at once you might cry to Him, Jesus, save me! I see the fight is too great for me, I cannot drive out my sins, I cannot fight my way to Heaven! Come and help me, Lord Jesus! I put myself into Your hands! Wash me in Your blood! Fill me with Your Spirit! Save me with Your great salvation, and let me be with You where You are!

No man can save himself, says one. Yet the case is very much like that of the master who sent his Negro servant with a letter. The Negro was rather lazy and came back with it. Why did you not deliver it? I could not. Could not deliver it? No, Master. Why not? A deep river, Sir, very deep river, I could not get across. A deep river? he said. Yes. Is not there a ferryman there? Do not know, Sir. If there was, he was on the other side. Did you call across, Boat, ahoy! No, Sir. Why then, you rascal, said he, what does it matter? It is no excuse. It is true, you could not get across the river, but then there was one there who could take you and you never cried to him.

And so it is in your case. You say, I cannot save myself. Quite true. But there is One who can, and you have never cried to Him. Mark youif you cry to Himif your heart says, Oh, Savior, come and save me! And if your spirit rests in Himdeep as that river of your sin certainly is, He knows how to bear you safely through it and land you on the other shore. May He do that with each of you. With God all things are possible, though with man it is impossible. May the blessing of the Most High rest upon us this night for Jesus sake. Amen.

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THE APPROACHABLENESS OF JESUS   
NO. 809

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 3, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. Luke 15:1.**

THE MOST depraved and despised classes of society formed an inner ring of hearers around our Lord. I gather from this that He was a most approachable Person, that He was not of repulsive manners, but that He courted human confidence and was willing that men should commune with Him. Upon that one thought I shall enlarge, this evening, and may the Holy Spirit make it a loadstone to draw many hearts to Jesus.

Eastern monarchs affected great seclusion and were liable to surround themselves with impassable barriers of State. It was very difficult for even their most loyal subjects to approach them. You remember the case of Esther, who, though the monarch was her husband, yet went with her life in her hands when she ventured to present herself before the king Ahasuerus, for there was a commandment that none should come unto the king except they were calledat peril of their lives.

It is not so with the King of kings! His court is far more splendid! His Person is far more worshipfulbut you may draw near to Him at all times without hindrance. He has set no men-at-arms around His palace gate. The door of His house of mercy is set wide open. Over the lintel of His palace gate is written, For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. Even in our own days great men are not readily to be come at. There are so many back stairs to be climbed before you can reach the official who might have helped you, so many subordinates to be parleyed with and servants to be passed by that there is no coming at your object.

The good men may be affable enough, themselves, but they remind us of the old Russian fable of the hospitable householder in a village who was willing enough to help all the poor who came to his doorbut he kept so many big dogs loose in his yard that nobody was able to get up to the thresholdand therefore his personal affability was of no service to the wanderers.

It is not so with our Master. Though He is greater than the greatest and higher than the highest, He has been pleased to put out of the way everything which might keep the sinner from entering into His halls of gracious entertainment. From His lips we hear no threats against intrusion, but hundreds of invitations to the nearest and dearest intimacy. Jesus is to be approached, not now and then, but at all times, and not by some favored few, but by all in whose hearts His Holy Spirit has enkindled the desire to enter into His secret Presence.   
The philosophical teachers of our Lords day affected very great seclusion. They considered their teachings to be so profound and eclectic that they were not to be uttered in the hearing of the common multitude. Far hence, you profane, was their scornful motto. Like Simon Stylites, they stood upon a lofty pillar of their fancied self-conceit and dropped down, now and then, a stray thought upon the vulgar herd beneath. But they did not condescend to talk familiarly with them, considering it to be a dishonor to their philosophy to communicate it to the multitude. One of the greatest philosophers wrote over his door, Let no one who is ignorant of geometry enter here.

But our Lord, compared with whom all the wise men are but fools, who is, in fact, the Wisdom of God, never drove away a sinner because of his ignorance! He never refused a seeker because he was not yet initiated and had not any thirsty spirit to be chased away from the crystal spring of Divine Truth. His every word was a diamond and His lips dropped pearls but He was never more at home than when speaking to the common people and teaching them concerning the Kingdom of God.

You may thus contrast and compare our Lords gentle manners with those of kings, and nobles, and sagesbut you shall find none to equal Him in condescending tenderness. To this attractive quality of our Lord I intend, this evening, as God shall help me, to ask your earnest attention. First, let us prove it. Secondly, illustrate it. And, thirdly, enforce or improve it.

I. First, let us PROVE THE APPROACHABLENESS OF CHRIST, though it really needs no proof, for it is a fact which lies upon the surface of His life.

1. You may see it conspicuously in His offices. Those offices are too many for us to take them all tonight. We will just cull a handful, say three. Our Lord Jesus is said to be the Mediator between God and man. Now, observe, that the office of Mediator implies at once that He should be approachable. A daysman, as Job says, is one who can put his hand upon bothbut if Jesus will not familiarly put His hand on man, certainly He is no daysman between God and man! A mediator is not a mediator of one he must be akin to both the parties between whom he mediates. If Jesus Christ shall be a perfect Mediator between God and man, He must be able to come to God so near that God shall call Him His Fellow and then He must approach to man so closely that He shall not be ashamed to call him Brother.

This is precisely the case with our Lord. Do think about this, you who are afraid of Jesus. He is a Mediator, and as a Mediator you may come to Him. Jacobs ladder reached from earth to Heaven, but if he had cut away half-a-dozen of the bottom rungs, what would have been the good of it? Who could ascend by it into the hill of the Lord? Jesus Christ is the great conjunction between earth and Heaven but if He will not touch the poor mortal man who comes to Him, why then, of what service is He to the sons of men?

You need a Mediator between your soul and Godyou must not think of coming to God without a Mediatorbut you do not need any mediator between yourselves and Christ. There is a preparation for coming to Godyou must not come to God without a perfect righteousness. But you may come to Jesus without any preparation and without any righteousness, because as Mediator He has in Himself all the righteousness and fitness that you requireand is ready to bestow them upon you! You may come boldly to Him even nowHe waits to reconcile you unto God by His blood.

Another of His offices is that of Priest. That word priest has come to smell very badly nowadays, but, for all that, it is a very sweet word as we find it in Holy Scripture. The word priest does not mean a gaudilydressed pretender who stands apart from other worshippers within the gate, two steps higher than the rest of the people, and professes to have power to dispense pardon for human sin, and I know not what beside! The true priest was truly the brother of all the people. There was no man in the whole camp so brotherly as Aaron. So much were Aaron and the priests who succeeded him the first points of contact with men, on Gods behalf, that when a leper had become too unclean for anybody else to draw near to him, the last man who touched him was the priest.

The house might be leprous, but the priest talked with him and examined himthe last of Israels tribes who might be familiar with the wretched outcast. And if afterwards that diseased man was cured, the first person who touched him must be a priest. Go, show yourself to the priest, was the command to every recovering leper. And until the priest had entered into fellowship with him and had given him a certificate of health, he could not be received into the Jewish camp. The priest was the true brother of the people. He was chosen from among themselves. He was at all times to be approached. He lived in their midst, in the very center of the camp, ready to make intercession for the sinful and the sorrowful.

So is it with our Lord. I read just now, in your hearing, that He can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities and that He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Surely you will never doubt that if Jesus perfectly sustains the office of Priest, as He certainly does, He must be the most approachable of beingsapproachable by the poor sinner who has given himself up to despairwhom only a Sacrifice can save. He must be approachable by the foul harlot who is put outside the camp, whom only the blood can cleanse. He must be approachable by the miserable thief who has to suffer the punishment of his crimes, whom only the great High Priest can absolve. No other man may care to touch you, O trembling Outcast, but Jesus will! You may be separated from all of humankind, justly and righteously by your iniquities, but you are not separated from that great Friend of sinners who at this very time is willing that publicans and sinners should draw near unto Him.

As a third office let me mention that the Lord Jesus is our Savior, but I see not how He can be a Savior unless He can be approached by those who need to be saved. The priest and the Levite passed by on the other side when the bleeding man lay in the road to Jericho. They were not saviors, therefore, and could not be. But he was the savior who came to know where the man was, stooped over him, and took wine and oil and poured them into the gaping fissures of his wounds. He was the savior who lifted him up with tender love and set him on his own beast and led him to the inn. He was the true savior, and, O Sinner, Jesus Christ will come just where you areand your wounds of sin, even though they are putrid shall not drive Him away from you! His love shall overcome the nauseating offensiveness of your iniquity for He is able and willing to save such as you are!

I might mention many other of the offices of Christ, but these three will suffice. Certainly if the Spirit blesses them, you will be led to see that Jesus is not hard to reach.

2. Consider a few of His names and titles. Frequently Jesus is called the Lamb. Blessed name! I do not suppose there is anyone here who was ever afraid of a lamb! That little girl yonder, if she saw a lamb, would not be frightened. Every child seems almost instinctively to long to put its hand on the head of a lamb. O that you might come and put your hand on the head of Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world

*Oh see how Jesus trusts Himself   
Unto our childish love,   
As though by His free ways with us   
Our earnestness to prove!   
His sacred name a common word   
On earth He loves to hear;   
There is no majesty in Him   
Which love may not come near.*

Again, you find Him called a Shepherdno one is afraid of a shepherd. If you were traveling in the East, and you saw Bedouins or Turkish soldiery in the distance, you might be alarmed. But if someone said, Oh, it is only a few shepherds, you would not be afraid of them. The sheep are not at all timid when near the shepherd. O poor wandering Sheep, you, perhaps, have come to be afraid of Christ, but there is no reason why you should be, for this heavenly Shepherd says, I will seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

*See Israels gentle Shepherd stands*

*With all engaging charms.*   
Timid, foolish, and wandering though you may be, there is nothing in the Good Shepherd to drive you away from Him, but everything to entice you to come to Him.

Then, again, He is called our Brother, and one always feels that he may approach his brother! I have no thought of trouble or distress which I would hesitate to communicate to my brother, here, for he is so good and kind. I do not think I could be in any trouble which I should not expect him to do his best to help me out of. I never feel that there is any distance between him and me, nor do you, I hope, feel so with regard to your brothers. Even so is it with this Brother born for adversity. Believer, how is it that you are sometimes so backward and so cold towards Jesus? Christ is approachable

*The light of love is round His feet,*

***His paths are never dim;   
And He comes near to us when we   
Dare not come near to Him.***

You need not think that your troubles are too trifling to bring to Him. He has an open ear for the little daily vexations of life. Brothers and Sisters, you can come to the good elder Brother at all hoursand when He blames you for coming, let me know.

He is called, too, a Friend. But He would be a very unfriendly Friend who could not be approached by those He professed to love. If my friend puts a hedge around himself and holds himself so very dignified that I may not speak with him, I would rather be without his friendship! But if he is a genuine friend, and I stand at his door knocking, he will say, Come in, and welcome; what can I do for you? Such a friend is Jesus Christ. He is to be met with by all needy, seeking hearts.

3. There is room enough for enlargement here, but I have no time to say more, therefore I will give you another plea. Remember His Person. The Person of our Lord Jesus Christ proclaims this truth with a trumpet voice. I say His Person, because He is Man, born of woman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, but if He were God only, you might well stand at a distance and shudder at the splendor of His majesty. But He is Man as well as God, and so it comes to pass, as Dr. Watts puts it

*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 Immanuels face appears,   
My hope, my joy begins;   
His name forbids my slavish fear,   
His Grace removes my sins.***

When I see Christ in the manger where the horned ox fed, or hanging on a womans breast, or obedient to His parents, or a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a poor Man without a place where to lay His head, then I feel that I can freely come to Him.

Think of Him as being precisely such as you are, in all and everything except sin and then you will never have a thought that He will chide you for drawing near, or drive you away when you venture to supplicate Him. But I want especially to say to you that if you could but see my Masters Person as He was when here on earth, you would have henceforth and forever the thought that you might not come to Him expelled from your mind. I know not what may have been His beauties, or what may have been the appearance of His lovely Countenancebut of this I am persuadedthat if He could but come here tonight and I could vacate this platform for Him whose shoelace I am not worthy to unloose, you who groan under a sense of unworthiness would not run away!

If Moses stood here with his flaming countenance, you would shade your eyes, and ask that if you must look upon him he might wear a veil. But if Christ were here, oh, how you longing, seeking ones would gaze upon Him! There would be no drooping of the eyelids, no covering of the face, no alarm, no anguishHis face is too sweet for that! And if the Master should walk down the aisles, the most timid of you would long to touch the hem of His garment and to kiss the floor where He had set His feet. I know you would not fear to look into that face! And then that voice! How you would be charmed, you poor trembling Seekers, if you heard Him say, Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.

You would discover such meekness and lowliness in Him that you would not

think of starting back. Oh, if your eyes could but see Him I feel persuaded that, graciously drawn by His charms, your hearts would hasten to Him! Well, Believer, come to Him, come to Him! Come close to Him! Come with your troubles and tell Him all about them. Come with your sins and ask to have them washed away anew

*Let us be simple with Him, then,   
Not backward, stiff, or cold,   
As though our Bethlehem could be   
What Sinai was of old.*

And you, poor trembling Sinner, come to Him! Come to Him now, for He has said, Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. Oh, if your eyes were opened to behold Him, you would perceive that the glory of His Person lies not in the splendor which repels, but in the majesty which Divinely attracts!

4. If this suffices not, let me here remind you of the language of Christ. He proclaims His approachability in such words as these, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. You rough-handed sons of toil, you smiths and carpenters, you plowers and diggers, come unto Me, yes, come all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And again, If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink. He invites men to come! He pleads with them to come!

And when they will not come He gently upbraids them with such words as these, You will not come unto Me that you might have life. And, again, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the Prophets, and stone them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not. It is not I would not, but, you would not. Why, the whole of Scripture in its invitations may be said to be the language of Christ, and there you find loving, pleading words of this kind, Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

All our blessed Lords sermons were so many loving calls to poor aching hearts to come and find what they needed in Him. I pray that the Holy Spirit may give an effectual call to many of you tonight. It would gladden the heart of the Redeemer in the skies if you would come to Him for salvation! You may come since there is no barrier between you and the Savior of men. What is it that keeps you back? I repeat it with tears, what is it that keeps you back? The old proverb truly says that, actions speak louder than words, and therefore let us review the general ways and manners of the Redeemer.

You may gather that He is the most approachable of persons from the actions of His life. He was always very busy, and busy about the most important of matters, and yet He never shut the door in the face of any applicant. Her Majestys cabinet have to discuss most important political matters just now, but compared with the work which filled the Saviors hands and heart, their discussions are mere trifles. Our Master might well have claimed seclusion but He did not. He sought it but He found none, save only at midnight, when He watched and prayed. No sort of appeal for audience did Jesus frown upon.

There were certain mothers in the land, poor simple-minded women, and they took it into their heads one day that they would like to have the Masters hands put upon the heads of their little ones. So they came, bringing their boys and girls. But some of the disciples said, The Master must not be disturbed by children. Go your ways, and take your children back. But what said Jesus? How different from His followers! He rebuked their harshness, and said, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. You see, He is a childs Friend. Dear young people, think of that! Jesus does not drive you away! Though He is so great and glorious that all the angels of God worship Him, yet He stoops to hear the prayers and praises of little children! Seek Him now, for those who seek Him early shall find Him.

Let me tell you another story. There was a woman in the city who was a sinner. You know the meaning, the dark sad meaning of that title in her case. I need not explain that. Poor Soul! Her sin had caused her to be despised and shunned by everyone, but she had been forgiven! And in gratitude she poured the precious ointment on her beloved Saviors feet, and then wiped them with the hairs of her head. And when the Pharisee Simon would have had her rebuked, the loving Master said, She loves much because she has had much forgiven. He is approachable by all, then, even by the worst! Even the harlot need not fear to draw near to HimHis touch can make her pure.

I have noted one thing in Christs life, and noted it with delight. Our Lord was always preaching, and He often grew weary, as we do. And therefore He needed a little retirement, but the multitude came breaking in upon His solitude, following Him on foot when He had sailed away to escape them. This was troublesome, and to us it would have been irritating, yet He never uttered an angry, fretful syllable. There was no rest for Him because of the eager crowdbut did He ever say, How these people tease Me. How they worry Me? No, never! His big heart made Him forget Himself. He was approachable to all at all hourseven his meals were disturbed, but he was gentle towards those thoughtless intruders. Not once was He harsh and repulsive. His whole life proves the truth of the prophecy, The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench. He graciously receives the weak and the feeble ones who come to Him, and sends none away empty.

6. But, if you want the crowning argument, look yonder. The Man who has lived a life of service at last dies a felons death! Look upon His head girt with the crown of thorns! Mark well His cheeks from where they have plucked off the hair! See the spit from those scornful mouths staining His marred countenance! Mark the crimson rivers which are flowing from His back where they have scourged Him! See His hands and His feet which are pierced with the nails, and from which rivers of blood are flowing! Look to that face so full of anguish! Listen to His cry, I thirst, I thirst! And as you see Him there expiring, can you think that He will spurn the seeker?

As you see Him turn His head and say to the dying thief by His side, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise, you dare not belie Him so much as to deem that you may not come to Him! You will outrage your reason if you start back from Jesus Crucified! The Cross of Christ should be the hope, the anchor of faith! You may come, Sinner, black, vile, hellish sinneryou may come and have life even as the dying thief had it when he said, Lord, remember me.

*There is life in a look at the Crucified One.* Surely you need not be afraid to come to Him who went to Calvary for sinners. Why linger? Why hesitate? Why those blushes, sobs, and tears?

*Why are you afraid to come,   
And tell Him all your case?   
He will not pronounce your doom,   
Nor frown you from your face.   
Will you fear Immanuel?   
Or dread the Lamb of God,   
Who, to save your soul from Hell,   
Has shed His precious blood?*

Did I hear a whisper? Did anybody say that Christ is now in Heaven, and that He may have changed? Ah, groundless insinuation! Do you know what He is doing in Heaven at this moment? He is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. What a help that is to those who are coming to Him! This repentance is the greatest need of coming sinners and He from the skies supplies it! Moreover, He ever lives to make intercession for us. His occupation in the skies is to plead for those sinners whom He redeemed with His blood, and therefore He is able to save them unto the uttermost. Since He is the Intercessor for souls, there is no reason why you should start back, but every reason why you should boldly come to the Throne of the heavenly Grace, because you have a High Priest who is passed into the heavens

*Compelled by bleeding love,   
You wandering sheep draw near!   
Christ calls you from above   
His charming accents hear!   
Let whoever will, now come,   
In mercys breast there still is room.*

Here I leave this part of the subject. Some of you little know how heavily this sermon is hanging on my mind. I preach my very soul to you this night! I wish I knew how to preach so as to win some of you for my Lord this evening. I should be glad to go even to the school of affliction if I might learn to preach more successfully. But I can do no more. May the Eternal Spirit, in answer to the prayers of His people, which I hope are going up now, be pleased to make you feel the sweet attractions of the Cross of Christ, and may you come to Him so that it may be said again tonight, Then drew near unto Him publicans and sinners.

II. I now shall proceed, with as great brevity as I can command, TO ILLUSTRATE THIS GREAT TRUTH. I illustrate it, in the first place, by the way which Christ opens up for sinners to Himself. What is the way for a sinner to come to Christ? It is simply thisthe sinner, feeling his need of a Saviortrusts himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the perplexity of my boyhood, but it is so simple now.

When I was told to go to Christ, I thought, Yes, if I knew where He was, I would go to Himno matter how I wearied myself I would trudge on till I found Him. I never could understand how I could get to Christ till I understood that it is a mental coming, a spiritual coming, a coming with the mind. The coming to Jesus which saves the soul is a simple reliance upon Him, and if, tonight, being sensible of your guilt, you will rely upon the atoning blood of Jesus, you have come to Him and you are saved! Is He not, then, approachable, indeed, if there is so simple a way of coming?

There are no good works, ceremonies, or experiences demandeda child-like faith is the royal road to Jesus!

This Truth of God is further illustrated by the help which He gives to coming sinners in order to bring them near to Himself. He it is who first makes them coming sinners. It is His Eternal Spirit who draws them unto Himself. They would not come to Him of themselves. They are without desires towards Him, but it is His work to cast secret silken cords around their hearts which He draws with His strong hands and brings them near to Himself. Depend upon it, He will never refuse those whom He Himself draws by His Spirit!   
Rest assured He will never shut the door in the face of any soul that comes to feed at the Gospel banquet, moved to approach by the power of His love. He said once, Compel them to come in, but He never said, Shut the door in their faces and bolt them out. I might further illustrate this to the children of God, by reminding you of the way in which you now commune with your Lord. How easy it is for you to reach His ear and His heart! A prayer, a sigh, a tear, a groan will admit you into the Kings chambers. You may be in a very sad frame of mind, but when you come to Him, how soon He makes your soul like the chariots of Amminadab.   
Dark may be your midnight, but as soon as you draw near to Him your night is over. He gives liberally, and upbraids not. While He acts thus with you, the sinner may very well believe that He will receive him, too. The approachableness of Christ may also be seen in the fact of His receiving the poor offerings of His people. The very holiest deeds which you and I can do for Christ are poor and faulty at the best. As I sat studying at my table last night, there was before me a little withered flowera sprig of wallflowerwhich has been lying for some weeks on my table. It comes from a very, very poor child of God, many miles away, who gets a blessing from reading my sermons. She has nothing in the world besides to give me, but she sends me this flower, and I value it because it is a token of Christian affection and gratitude.  
So is it with our Master. The very best sermons that we preach, and the largest contributions we give to His treasury are only just like that poor little withered wallflower. But the Master puts our service in His bosom and keeps it there, and thinks much of it because He loves us. Does not that prove how generous, how condescending, how tender He must be? Believe Him to be so, you fearful souls, and come to Him. The ordinances wear upon their forefront the impress of an ever approachable Savior. Baptism in outward type sets forth our fellowship with Him in His death, burial, and resurrectionwhat can be nearer than this?   
The Lords Supper in visible symbol invites us to eat His flesh and drink His bloodthis reveals to us most clearly how welcome we are to the most intimate communion with Jesus. The Heaven of heavens shall afford us yet another illustration. There are tens of thousands now in the skies who came to Jesus just as they were, in all the filth and carelessness of the lost estateand He received every one of them into His heart of love and arms of power. There are many thousands on earththere are some thousands now in this Tabernaclewho can testify that they have found Jesus to be a very tender and generous Friend.   
Now, if He has received us, why should He not receive you? Be encouraged to believe that inasmuch as He has received others He has open arms for you, also. Let me joyfully remind you that Jesus never has rejected a seeking sinner. There is not to be found in all the kingdoms of the universe a single instance of a sincere seeker after Christ being cast away, and there never shall be, for He has not said to the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain, but He has said, Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out. Beloved, if there had been a single soul cast away we should have known of it by now! It is 1868 years now, and if a solitary penitent had been rejected, we should have heard of it before now, for I will tell you of one who would have spread it abroad, and that is Satan!   
If he could get a single instance of a soul who had repented and trusted Christ but found that Christ would have nothing to do with him, it would be a standing scandal against the Cross which Satan would delight to publish! I know, poor Sinners, what the devil will tell you when you are coming to Christhe will describe Jesus as a hard master, but you tell him he is a liar from the beginning, and a murderer, and that he is trying to murder your soul by making you swallow his poisonous lies.   
III. In the third place, we come TO ENFORCE THIS TRUTH, or, as the old Puritans used to say, improve it. The first enforcement I give is this let those of us who are working for the Master in soul-winning, try to be like Christ in this matter, and not be, as some are apt to beproud, stuck-up, distant, or formal. Oh, dear, dear! The lofty ministerial airs that one has seen assumed by men who ought to have been meek and lowly! What a grand set of men some of the preachers of the past age thought themselves to be! I trust those who played the archbishop have nearly all gone to Heaven, but a few linger among us who use little grace and much starch.   
The grand divines never shook hands with anybody, except, indeed, with the deacons and a little knot of evidently superior persons. Among Dissenters it was almost as bad as it is in most Church congregations where you feel that the good man, by his manner, is always saying, I hope you know who I am, Sir. I am the rector of the parish. Now, all that kind of stuck-upishness is altogether wrong. No man can do good in that wayand no good at all comes of assuming superiority and distance. The best teacher for boys is the man who can make himself a boy. And the best teacher for girls is the woman who can make herself a girl among girls.   
I often regret that I have so large a congregation. You will say, Why? Why, when I had a smaller congregation at Park Street, there were too many even then, but I did get a shake of the hand sometimes. But now there are so many of you that I scarcely know you, good memory as I have, and I seldom have the pleasure of shaking hands with youI wish I did. If there is anybody in the wide world whose good I wish to promote, it is yours! Therefore I wish to be at home with you. And if ever I should affect the airs of a great man, and set myself above you alland separate myself by proud manners from your sympathyI hope the Lord will take me down and make me right again. We may expect souls to be saved when we do as Christ did, namely, get publicans and sinners to draw near to us.   
Now, that is a practical point which, though you have smiled about it, will not, I hope, be forgotten by you. There is this to be said to you who are unconvertedif Jesus Christ is so approachable, oh, how I wishhow I wish that you would approach Him! There are no bolts upon His doors, no barred iron gates to pass, no big dogs to keep you back. If Christ is so approachable by all needy ones, then needy One, come, and welcome! Come just now! What is it that keeps you back?   
You think that you do not feel your need enough, or that you are not fit to comeboth of which suspicions are self-righteousness in different shapes. O that you did but know your need of Jesusin order to be able, evento do so much as feel your need! You are a poor, miserable bankrupt before God, and Christ alone can enrich you! Do not talk of fitness there is no such thing   
*All the fitness He requires,   
Is to feel your need of Him:   
This He gives you;   
Tis the Spirits rising beam.*   
Come, then! There is such mercy to be had! There is such a Hell to be escaped from! There is such a Heaven to be opened for you! Delay not, but believe at once. Come, come, come!   
*Come, and welcome!   
Come, and welcome,   
Sinner, come!*   
I stand at Mercys door tonight and say to every passerby in the name of the Master, My oxen and fatlings are killed. Come, come, come to the supper! O that you would come this very night! Some of us are coming to the Lords Table to celebrate His love because we have first come to Himself. I do not ask you who are not saved to come to that tableyou ought not to come. You must first come to Jesusand then you may come to this ordinance. Meanwhile, the best thing you can do is to come to Christ. And let me ask you to remember this, that in proportion as Christ is accessible, so your guilt will be increased if you do not come to Him! If it is easy to come to Him, what excuse can there be for you if you refuse to accept Him?   
I have tried to tell you what the way of salvation is. If I knew how to use better language, or even coarser language, if that would suit you, it should be alike to me if I might but touch your consciences, break your hearts, and bring you to Christ. But I protest before you that if you will not come to my Master I can do no more. I shall be clear of your blood at the last, and in the Day of Judgment your ruin must be upon your own heads. But let it not be so! Jesus bids you come! O you needy oneslet your need impel you to come at once that you may find eternal life in Him!   
The last word isif Jesus is such a Savior as we have described Him, let saints and sinners join to praise Him! How marvelous that our dear Lord should be so condescending to us unworthy ones as to come all the way from Heaven to earth for us! Oh, matchless love that made Him stoop to grief and death! Oh, unspeakable condescension, to come thus to poor sinners hearts bearing mercies in both His hands, and freely giving them to undeserving rebels! For this unspeakable Grace let us praise Him!   
You who are coming to His table, draw near with praises in your mouths! Come praising the condescending love in which you have participated and which has saved you from eternal death! Even you who sit as spectators, I do trust will have your minds filled with grateful thoughts *Jesus sits on Zions hill   
He receives poor sinners still.*   
Blessed be His name, world without end! Amen.

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**CHRIST AND HIS HEARERS   
NO. 3410**

**A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1914.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
**Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners to hear Him, and the Pharisees and Scribes   
murmured, saying, This Man receives   
sinners and eats with them.   
Luke 15:1, 2.**

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS always seeks to blame others and to whitewash itself. The group that stood nearest to Christ in preaching was composed of two classes of personsthe publicans, or tax-gatherers and the open sinners. Now the Pharisee, when he came to speak of these two classes, called them by one name, lumping them all under one description and calling them all sinners. Now, although the publicans, or taxgatherers, were very generally taken from the lowest class of Jews, and their calling of tax-gathering, never in itself, too popular, was in their particular case very objectionable, yet we have no reason to believe that all tax-gatherers were necessarily profane, or licentious, or dishonest. There were bad and good among those Jewish tax-gatherers, as well as among all other classes of mankind! Yet, because they were looked upon as being of the lowest class, the Pharisee spoke of them as if they were all sinners. This is a common habit, I am afraid, with the Too-Goodswith those who have never felt their own sinfulness, to always use the worst names they can and to put as bad a color as they can upon the characters of other men. I wish we had learned to do the very reverse, namely, to try to see all the good we can in our fellow creatures, which were far more like Christ, rather than to condemn them wholesale, and impute the faults of some to a whole class. The Holy Spirit here speaks of publicans and sinnersthe evil spirit in the Pharisee calls them all sinners. Let us imitate the Spirit of God and not the spirit of pride.

But I said that self-righteousness tries to whitewash itself, for did not these Pharisees, when they murmured that Christ received sinners, intend to say that as He did receive them, they were not sinners? No, they would not have blushed, for they were rather honest in their selfrighteousnessperhaps more honest than we arethey would not have blushed to have said, We have thanked God that we are not as the publicans, and not as the sinners. They did not reckon themselves as belonging to the class of offenders and breakers of the Law of God. They were holy! They were the separated ones! They were a peculiar people, zealous for good works after their own estimation, though not in the sight of God. Alas, how easy it is for us to try to make ourselves appear to be better than we really are! We are full of sinour nature is deceitful and vile, and yet we try to draw up a good balance sheet, if we can, of our spiritual trading! We represent that to be sound which is rotten, and that to be accepted which is dishonored. Oh that we could but see ourselves as God sees us! We would never again, then, dare even to think a good thought of ourselves out of Christ, but abhorring ourselves in dust and ashes, we would wrap His righteousness about us! We would plunge into the crimson fountain of His blood and never hope to be accepted except in the Beloved! May God grant us Grace to beware of the least touch of self-righteousness, for it is evil, only evil and that continually! May we always be as timid as the publican who stood afar off and dared not even lift up his eyes to Heaven, rather than be as censorious and presumptuous as the Pharisee, whose sole prayer consisted in flattering himself that he was better than others.

Having thus introduced to you the Pharisees, the publicans and the sinners, let us now come to the text, itself, and observe that publicans and sinners were attracted to the ministry of Christ. The first question at this time shall bewhat attracted them? Then secondly, what in the Gospel should attract us? And thirdly, what came of their being attracted, and what comes to us, also, of our being attracted by the Gospel?

First, then, it seems that when Christ preached, He was surrounded by a number of persons of very loose character, and others of the lowest calling who pressed to Him to hear Him.

I. WHY DID CHRISTS HEARERS COME?   
They were genuine hearersit was a bona fide audience. I mean by that, that they were not like the crowds who followed Christ up the mountainwho followed not to hear Him, but to eat of the loaves and the fishes. These publicans and sinners were not thinking of the loaves and fishes. They were none of those who, like the old people in some parishes, go to Church in order to get the loaf of bread on the Sunday morning. They were real, bona fide hearers, who really went to hear. They were a genuine, earnest, and honest audienceand they pressed around Him to listen to Him. Why did they do this?   
I will tell you why they did not. They certainly were not attracted to Christ by any ceremonialism which Christ used, or any kind of pomp or show of priestcraft in His dress. It is said that the working classes do not attend places of worship because we do not dress ourselves in white, and blue, and green, and I do not know what other colors besidesin other words, because we do not make fools of ourselves! It is said that people will not come to hear us because of this, but our Lord Jesus Christ never put on anything like a priestly vestment in His life! The common dress in which He robed Himself was a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout, or rather, the usual dress of the East. There was nothing whatever in His garb that was distinctive. John the Baptist, it is true, put on prophetic robesthe rough robe of hair-skin and some have used that same rough garment to deceive, but Christ was perfectly a Man among men. I may venture to say that whoever else was a clergyman, Jesus Christ was not, and whoever else was a priest, as one of a priestly caste set apart from the people, He was none. He was just a Man among men. He ate as they ate, and drank as they drank. He toiled as other carpenters have done in the carpenters shop, and when He came to speak in public, He spoke like one of the people. His authority was not derived from His robes! He had not to step into the vestry and put on His garments to get His dignity. His dignity was in the Man, Himself, in the Spirit that filled the Man. That which attracted people to Him was certainly nothing external and had nothing to do with milliners shops, but was something far other than that.   
Again, the publicans and sinners certainly did not come to Christ to hear Him because of His laborious reasoning. The working classes of London, we are told, if they are ever to be brought to places of worship, need that we should argue with them, and prove to them the existence of God, the Divinity of Christ, the truth of the Bible and all such things and they are not led by our dogmatism! That is the statement that is made. I believe it to be as false as those who say it is impertinent. I do not find our Savior ever trying to prove that there is a God. I do not find Him standing up and continually apologizing! His mode of address is, in the strongest sense, and I grant you in a sense far above what you and I could claim to adopt, dogmatic! Verily, verily, I say unto you. That is His argument. I testify what I do know, and what I have seen of the Father, and He bears witness to the Truths of God with a full, down-right certainty which does not admit of a doubt! True, He has an answer for the Sadducees, but it is curt, sharp and decisive. And He goes on His way to preach His own Gospel, which is evidently His delight and His forte. No, if publicans and sinners came to Christ, they did not come to Him to be amazed with the display of intellect or to be dazzled with the remarkably judicious manner in which He would handle a debate! They came for some other reason than that.   
Again, if they came to Jesus Christ, they certainly did not come because of His trimming Doctrines. He was not one who excused sin, or who made it out to be a weakness, incidental to human nature. No, He denounced sin in the most burning terms! They did not come to Him because He was one who preached smooth things with regard to the punishment of sin. No, my Brothers and Sisters, of all the preachers that ever lived, none ever preached on the wrath of God in such terrible terms as Jesus Christ, Himself! Though He was full of tenderness and full of love, yet you hear Him speak of the worm that never dies, and of the fire that never shall be quenched! He loved mens souls too well to make them think that sin was a trifle! He loved them too well to let them run the risk of everlasting woe without warning them of it in the plainest terms. No, if any sat at Jesus feet to learn of Him, it was not because their conscience remained unmolested and they were lulled by siren strains into a deadly sleep! His spirit-stirring words must often have sent bolts right through and through their consciences! They did not, therefore, go because He used fair speech and so amused the people, and lulled them to sleep in sin!   
Once more, if the publicans and sinners listened to Christ in crowds, it was not because of His vehement gesticulation or His declamation. He was not a preacher who was at all given to the stamping of the foot. He shall not strive, nor cry, nor His voice be heard in the streets. The bruised reed He shall not break, and the smoking flax He shall not quench. He opened His mouth and spoke, and He spoke with matchless oratory, for never man spoke like that Man. But it was all simple and plain. You see no traces of logic. There are no signs of rhetoric. You do not catch Him for a moment, as it were, seeking so to awaken the emotions as to ignore the intellect, and so to stir the passions as if men were only children to the frightened or to be cajoled. He speaks to them as men! He appeals to their entire nature and while the Truths He utters are full of pathos that stir the very depths of the soul, yet are they gentle and quiet, and His speech distils as the dew and drops as the rain. Let none think that they can win a congregation by the mere force of gesticulation. Jesus did not so.

What then, was it that attracted these people? They were not generally sermon-hearers. Look at that fellow, there with his ink bottle. He will look up the Jew that has forgotten to pay his tribute to Caesar. He is very quick about that, but he is not a man who is at all likely to attend theological discussions. Do you see that villain, there, with the low forehead? Why, I do believe he is the very man who was tried and who only escaped with his life upon a doubtful point at the last Passover! And there is that womanoh, yes, there can be no doubt about her character! You know her, and what she is. Do you see them there? They are all listening, not with their ears, only, but with their very eyes and mouths they are drinking in every word that Man is saying as He talks to them about the lost sheep and the lost son. What is it that enthralls them? What are the golden chains that come from His mouth and hold these by their ears? What can the secret be? I think it lay partly in this, that He was a Man awfully in earnest. As they looked up to Him, they all felt that He was a real Man. The Pharisees were starched with decorum and full of affectation. These people were too simpleminded, though wicked, to believe in the Scribes and Phariseesand so they went their way to their own haunts and never regarded their teaching. But with half an eye, they could see standing there a Man unaffected, sincere and in earnest, who was speaking of something which He, Himself, believed, and speaking it with power and force because He felt it in His soul! Oh, never was there such an earnest preacher as the Master! No idle word has He to give account of! No words to recollect that lack results because they came not fresh from the Speakers heart! All He speaks is to the point and all of it came deep from His hearts inmost self. This drew the people to Him.   
They were attracted, too, no doubt, because He honestly touched their consciences. It would be supposed, my Brothers and Sisters, that the very intelligent, wise, rational and seemly Doctrine of Unitarianism, as we are commonly told it is, would everywhere be attended by crowds but there are scarcely any places in which that Doctrine is preached in which you might not catch any number of spiders, and study the whole science of entomology as far as these interesting creatures are concerned! How is this? Why, as one said, once, The people know in their hearts somehow or other, I cannot tell how, that this that you preach is not true. Although it looks so well and so rational, and seems to flatter them so much, yet they do not come to hear it, for in their hearts they know it is not true. It is a strange thing that if the old evangelical Doctrines should appear for one moment to be beaten in a debate, they always conquer in results. I shall defy any man to maintain a Church prosperously, or to keep up a denomination which is built upon unsound Doctrine with anything like prosperity during a term of years. The bubble shines and glitters, but it is too thin to last, and it goes. Now, after all, the worst men like to hear a preacher who will dash at their consciences, who will tell them what they, in their inner selves, know to be true! And as Jesus Christ never flinched from this, but told them just what was fact, the people delighted to gather round Him and to listen to His speech.  
Moreover, and I doubt not that this was the great charm they perceivedthat He intensely loved them, that He did not preach the Truths of God merely that it might cause philosophic speculation and because He was highly pleased to teach it, but because He wanted that Truth to raise, to bless, to comfort, to save them and to make them happy. The Pharisee, if he ever spoke to a publican or a sinner, would do it with a long space between them, gathering up his robes for fear of contagion, looking down upon the sinner as though the teacher were so much above the taught. But Christ came right among them, and was one of them and He looked as if He would do anything for them if He might but deliver them from their sins. They knew this, and it was this mighty charm that embraced them and made them linger till the voice had done, and then carry away the echoes of those loving tones in their memories for many a day afterwards.   
Besides that, I doubt not that another charm of Christs preaching lay in this, that He always preached Doctrine that was hopeful to them. While He said, Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, He had loving words for weary and heavy-laden ones. While He denounced self-righteousness, He would turn round and say, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If He ever had a frown upon His brow, it was for the hypocrite and the proud man, but He had tears for sinners, He had loving invitations for penitent ones. Like a good physician, He sought out morally sick folk and sought to restore them to spiritual health. This it was, also, that helped to attract them to Christ.   
Now, my dear Hearers, I believe that if you would tell me your characters, I could tell you whether, if Jesus Christ were here now, you would be likely, habitually, to hear Him or not. If you are a very excellent person who never did anything wrong. If you feel yourself a deal above most people. If you have a proper sense of your own dignity, and if you are much impressed with your own importance, I believe that you would have murmured at Christ. And I am quite sure that you would not have been in the throng that drew near to hear Him. But if you are sensible that you have been guilty. If you confess that you have broken Gods Law. If you are anxious to be forgiven, or if you are conscious that you are forgiven, but still need to be daily washed, to be daily kept, to be daily dealt with in tenderness and loveoh, you are the men and women who would have made a bodyguard about that Prince of Preachers, for as surely as His Doctrine was meant for you as the rain comes down upon the mown grass, so was your state of mind meant for the Gospel! And you and the Savior would be quite sure to stand in near and proper relationship to one another!   
But we cannot linger, and must pass on, now, to the second point   
II. WHAT IS THERE IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST THAT DOES NOT ATTRACT SOME OF US, BUT OUGHT TO ATTRACT US ALL?   
Very briefly, there is this in the Gospel that attracts my soul and I will speak for others. Ever since we fell out with God through sin, the thought of God has been dreadful to us. We have been afraid of Him. But Jesus Christ is God and He has taken upon Himself our manhood. And now He tells us that we may come to God through Himin fact, that if we come to Him, when we have seen Him, we have seen the Father! Now, as I want to be one with God, and yet shudder at the thought of coming to Him, my soul burns with fervent affection towards Christ! And when I see that I can come to God so safely and so sweetly by coming through Him, that attracts me.  
Next, ever since we were awakened to a sense of what sin is, sin has been a great burden to us. We have offended against God, and we know it. Oh, that this offense could be blotted out! Now, Jesus Christ comes and shows that, altogether without a violation of justice, God can put away all our sins as if they had never been! The Gospel tells us that Christ becomes a Substitute for us, that He was punished instead of all those who believe in Him, so that the Law takes effect, Justice is satisfied and yet God is gracious. I know when I first learned that Truth of God, my heart was ravished with it. I have read books, sometimes, that have kept me up at night to read them, or I have got hold of ideas that have almost made me dance when I have got thembut that old idea of Substitutionoh, Sirs, it was the brightest day I ever lived when I learned thatthat the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all! You know, an awakened conscience cannot play with sin as some of you do and imagine that God can easily forgive sinbut when the conscience is awakened, it feels that God cannot forgive sin without exacting the punishment that is due to sin! Then there comes in to meet this difficulty the fact that Christ is punished in the place of the Believerthat God is just, and yet the Justifier of him that believes. Here is another precious Truth that has attracted many of us to Christ. I pray God that it may attract many others to Him. Here is the way of pardoned sin and here is the way of access to God!   
Brothers and Sisters, we feel in ourselves so many inabilities, we cannot do anything right! We feel that we cannot pray. There are times when, if we gave a world for it, we cannot shed a tear, when we cannot make our hard hearts melt, cannot get repentance out of these dry souls! Oh, but then this attracts me to Christ, to find that He can give me all Gracethat in Him all fullness dwells, that His Spirit helps our infirmities and that just as I amwounded, broken, sin-sick, hard, cold and dead Christ comes and meets my case! Oh, how this ought to attract us to Christ!   
And then oftentimes the fear comes up to every awakened manShall I hold on? If I begin to be a Christian, shall I hold out to the end? Will not temptation yet lead me astray? Then Christ comes in and says, Because I live, you shall live also. I give unto My sheep, eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands. Oh, Savior, this is a silken bond to draw us to Yourself! Was there ever a greater attraction than thisall safe in Christ! The lambs of the flock, the weakest ones, all safe! The man of imperious passions, the man with once imperious lustsall safe when once they put themselves in the hands of Christ! Then can we all say, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day. But the thought comes over us sometimes, Ah, but what will it be to die? That hour of deathhow grim it looks! And, indeed, it never is childs play to dieto pass into the unknown and the invisible! The naked spiritto leave the body behindis to become food for worms. The bravest man may well turn pale here! But oh, the attraction of Christ is,

He that believes in Me shall never die. Though he were dead, yet shall he live. Oh, the thought of resurrection! The thought that death is changed, no longer to be a penal sentence, but to be merely an entrance into Heaven! The thought that   
*Jesus will make a dying bed   
Feel soft as downy pillows are,   
While on His breast we lean our head   
And breathe our life out sweetly there.*   
The thought that He will come and meet us, and that our spirits, side by side with His, shall pass through the iron gate with a song upon our lips, and fear no terror as we pass by the gates of the grave! My Brothers and Sisters, this woos us to Christ! This holds us to Christ! This charms and fascinates us! This is a faith that well sustains us, that blots out the past, that brightens the present and lights up the future with the expectation of the glory to be revealed!  
My Hearer, if you have never had Christ, do you not desire Him? Man, if Christ is yours, Heaven is yours. Man, if you believe in Christ, this night, your transgressions shall be forgiven you! You shall become a child of God, an heir of immorality! Do you not need a Savior? Will you not ask for one? Oh, yield you, yield you now to Him who was given for you, who round you now, the cords of His love would cast, binding you fast to His altar! God grant in His Infinite Mercy that the attractions of the Gospel may be known to us all! And now, in the last place   
III. WHAT CAME OF IT?  
Those who were attracted first to hear were, according to the second verse, still further blessed. The Pharisees said, notThis Man preaches to sinners, but, This Man receives sinners and eats with them. It is a great blessing when the Gospel is preached to sinners, but oh, it is a far greater blessing when sinners are received, when sinners come to eat with Christ. The Pharisees left out what they ought to have mentioned, that when Christ received sinners, He did not leave them sinners. It is no disgrace to say of a certain doctor in London, Why, it is said that that doctor has had some of the most horrible cases in London. I saw one man, there, with a dreadful cancer. Another was taken in that was subject to epilepsy. I saw one with a leprosy taken into that physicians house. Is that any disgrace to the physician? Why, Sir, the thing is how did they come out? What were they after his skill had been exerted upon them? What they were when they went into the hospital is no disgrace to the hospitalit may even reflect honor upon the wisdom of those who exercised their skill within it. So that Christ receives sinners is true, but He first makes them penitent sinners! He makes them believing sinners! He changes their nature! He turns the lion into a lamb, the raven into a doveand then when He has done this, when He has washed away their sins and changed their naturesHe receives them to be His friends! None are so near to Christ as blood-washed sinners! He receives them to be His disciples! None could sit at His feet but those who first have been washed in His blood. Then He receives them as His servants. None can serve Him who have not first been served by Him. Then He receives these sinners to be His advocates. He sends them out to preach His Gospel, but He never sends any out to preach the Gospel unless, first of all, they have received Him into their hearts as the Gospel of their salvation. This Man receives sinners.   
Oh, I wish that tonight the Lord would find the biggest sinner in the Tabernacle! I might say, if there were such a person present, one commonly known to be the biggest blackguard in the parish, I wish the Lord would light on just such an one, for the raw material for a great saint is often a great sinner! When the devil wanted to make the biggest sinner that ever lived, he took an Apostle to be the raw material, namely, Judas, and made him the son of perdition. But when Christ wanted the greatest of preachers, and the best of all the Apostles, He went right into the devils camp and laid hold of Saul of Tarsusand made him become Paul, the mighty winner of souls! This Man receives sinners. The thief, the drunkard, the harlotHe still receives them! He washes them, changes them, takes them into His society, lifts them uptakes the beggar from the dunghill and makes him sit among princes. Oh, mighty Master, do this deed of Grace again and though the Pharisees will murmur and the proud may still slander Your name, we who are sinners, too, will clap our hands for very joy and bless Your love and adore Your Grace, world without end! This Man receives sinners.   
And then they said, And eats with them. Yes, in a mystical sense you will see that done again tonight, for here is the TABLE, the Lords Table, peculiarly so, and to that Table let no man come who has never been a sinner, for he will not be welcome! Let no man come who has not felt himself to be a sinner, for he will not be welcome. If there is a man that is rich in good things and that is full of good things, let him not come, for, He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty. If there is a handmaiden here of low estate and humble mind, let her come, for He has remembered the low estate of His handmaiden. But if there are any that are great and mighty, and exalted in their own estimation, let them stand aside and hear Him say, He has put down the mighty from their seat, and He has exalted them of low degree. Here is a Table spread for sinners, sinners blood-washed, but still sinners. I often feel, my Brothers and Sisters, as if I could not come to the Cross anyway but as a sinner. I think I told you this parable once. Once there was a great king who used to have a table spread every day, and there were two sorts of persons who had a right to come there. All round the king, on his right and left, sat the princes of the blood and the nobles of the highest rank. They came in their robes of state and there they sat, and they were welcome. At the other end of the table, the king in his bounty had bidden his chamberlain every day spread many dainty dishes for beggars, and if there were any in the city at any time who were foot sore, who were houseless and homeless, ragged and hungry, the notice was given that anyone who could plead abject poverty might come to the kings table. Now, it so happened once on a time that a prince of the blood had lost, as he thought, the deeds of his estate. Moreover, he had lost the register of his birth and he was afraid that all that he had ever possessed had never been rightly his own. Perhaps he was some changeling child, he said, for such things had been. Perhaps his estates were not his own, and as the time came round for the feast, he felt as if he did not dare put on his robes lest he should be shown to be an impostor. But then it flashed across his mind, If I have been an impostor up till now, and I am not the son of my reputed father. If the estates and the rich gems I have, are not mine, then I am a poor beggar and I have not anything. So he took off his fine garments and found some common dress that had been laid aside. I must sit at the kings table somewhere, he said, and if I cannot go as a prince, I will go as a beggar and so, one way or the other I will eat of his banquet. Brothers and Sisters, I have often had to do that, and I would advise you to do it whenever your doubts and fears come across you. If Jesus Christ cannot receive you and you cannot come to Him as a saint or as a child of God, remember, that This Man receives sinners and eats with them. Come with all your sins! Come, I say, and you cannot be cast out!   
Many years ago the shaft of a mine was blocked up by some falling earth, and there was no chance of the miners escape. They gathered themselves together and held a Prayer Meeting in expectation of a speedy death, for it did not seem probable that they would ever be able to get out by the shaft, which was so thoroughly destroyed. While they were in prayer, a happy thought struck one of the older miners. He had heard that there was an old shaft which led into another mine, which had been given up, and he said he would go first and perhaps they might be able, by going through some old passages, to come out into the old mine. He knew from what he had heard his father say, that much of it was very low, and water dripped into it, and that in some places they would have to keep on all fours. But for all that, he said, it would not matter so long as they could but get to the daylight again. They could not go up the regular shaft, but away they went, creeping down the back ways, all through the mire, mud, and filth, and dirt and darknessbut they came to the light at last and all came up safe to their homes again.   
Now, sometimes when I can look straight up to my Lord, I know that I am His child. I do tonight, and I can rejoice to go up and down the shaft straight ahead. But, Brothers and Sisters, if ever you cannot do that, there is an old working, there is an old way, the way that all the saints have gone. You will have to go on your hands and knees. You will have to go on all fours. You will find it flooded with tears of repentance, but never mind, the devil himself cannot block up that way. If you cannot come as a saint, come as a sinner! If you have got no Grace, you can get Grace. If you cannot come with a tender heart, come for a tender heart. If you cannot come with faith, come to get faith, for this Man receives sinners and eats with them. May this Blessed Man come and eat with us tonight!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 15:11-32.**

**Verses** 11-13. And He said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. It was an act of ingratitude to leave his father at allan act of extreme folly to turn his fathers goods to ill-account.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in need. And the sinners greatest all will be spent one day! The pleasures of sin are but for a season. The strongest sinew in an arm of flesh will one day crack. The flowers that grow in mans garden will one day fademan may think he has an eternity of pleasure before him, but if he is looking to the flesh for it, it shall be but for an hour.

15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. And he sent him into his fields to feed swine. At the very best, the comforts of this world are ignominious to a man. They degrade himas it was a very degrading employment for a Jew to feed swineso the comfort the world can give to a man does but degrade his noble spirit.

16. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him. The prodigal cannot be brought any lower! He is made to herd with the swine, and he envies even them because they are satisfied with the husks! He cannot eat of the same and, therefore, he envies even the brutes! Surely, when a sinner becomes fully convinced of sin, he may well envy even the sparrows or the serpents because they have not sinned!

17-20. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants. And he arose, and went to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him. Remember Matthew Henrys paraphrase?Here were eyes of mercy.

20. And had compassionHere was a heart of mercy.   
20. And ranHere were legs of mercy.   
20. And fell on his neckHere were deeds of mercy.   
20. And kissed himAnd here were lips of mercy.   
21-22. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in your sight and am no more worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servantsHere were words of mercy, wonders of mercy and, indeed, it is all mercy throughout!   
22-25. Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring here the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field. That is where these over-good elder sons always are they are out at workthey are not at home in communion with God! They are in the field! Do not ask who the elder brother washe is here tonightthere is many an envious moralistyes, and an envious professor, too, who feels it hard that profligate offenders should be pardoned!

25-27. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Your brother is come; and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has received him safe and sound. And he was angry. He did not want the fatted calf killed! If this reprobate brother were allowed to come in at the back door and to eat with the servants, he thought that quite good enough, but for this rebel to be put upon an equality with himselfhe could not bear that!

28. And would not go in: therefore came his father out and entreated him. See the tenderness of this father? The same arms which embraced the sinning one, were also ready to clasp the self-righteous one! I always feel great pity and great admiration for this dear, dear father. What with a bad son and a good son, he had two bad sons, for this good son, you see, had got in a pet just as I have seen some real Christians get into a very un-Christian frame of mind! Well, they do not like, somehow, receiving into their company the women who have gone astraythe men who have lost their reputation. He was angry and would not go inand now his father crowned his love. He ran to meet one son and now he comes out to reason with another who is unnaturally and ungraciously angry with him.

29. And he, answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do 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. I know the brother. He says, I have been a consistent Christian. I have been diligent in the service of God. I have abounded in prayer and yet all the daylong have I been plagued and chastened every morning. I do not get much joyI have such a sight and sense of temptation and sin that I am generally low spirited. I seldom get a drop of full assurance. I never get a kid given me, that I might make merry with my friends. Those who are under the Law never do make merry. You never knew a man yet that was trying to save himself by keeping the Commandments of God that could dare to make merry. No, they have to draw long faces, and well they may, for they have a long task before them! They put on a garb of sadness, being of a sad countenance, as the hypocrites are!  
31, 32 But as soon as this, your son, was come, who has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf. And he said, to him, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for this, your brother, was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found. And so, dear Friends, there is more joy over the prodigal when he returns, than over the man who thinks he never has been astray!

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 #203 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE SYMPATHY OF THE TWO WORLDS   
NO. 203

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 4, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.**   
AT THE MUSIC HALL ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. Luke 15:10.**

MANS heart is never big enough to hold either its joys or its sorrows. You never heard of a man whose heart was exactly full of sorrow. For no sooner is it full, than it overflows. The first prompting of the soul is to tell its sorrow to another. The reason is that our heart is not large enough to hold our grief. And we need to have another heart to receive a portion thereof. It is even so with our joy. When the heart is full of joy, it always allows its joy to escape. It is like the fountain in the marketplace whenever it is full it runs away in streams and so soon as it ceases to overflow, you may be quite sure that it has ceased to be full. The only full heart is the overflowing heart.

You know this, Belovedyou have proved it to be true. For when your soul has been full of joy, you have first called together your own kindred and friends and you have communicated to them the cause of your gladness. And when those vessels have been full even to the brim, you have been like the woman who borrowed empty vessels of her neighbors, for you have asked each of them to become partakers in your joy and when the hearts of all your neighbors have been full, you have felt as if they were not large enough and the whole world has been called upon to join in your praise.

You bade the fathomless ocean drink in your joy. You spoke to the trees and bade them clap their hands, while the mountains and hills were invoked by you to break forth into singing. The very stars of Heaven seemed to look down upon you and you bade them sing for you and all the world was full of music through the music that was in your heart. And after all, what is man but the great musician of the world? The universe is a great organ with mighty pipes. Space, time, eternity, are like the throats of this great organ. And man, a little creature, puts his fingers on the keys and wakes the universe to thunders of harmony, stirring up the whole creation to mighty acclamations of praise. Dont you know that man is Gods high priest in the universe? All things else are but the sacrifice. But he is the priestcarrying in his heart the fire and in his hand the wood and in his mouth the two-edged sword of dedication with which he offers up all

things to God.

But I have no doubt, Beloved, the thought has sometimes struck us that our praise does not go far enough. We seem as if we dwelt in an isle cut off from the mainland. This world, like a fair planet, swims in a sea of ether unnavigated by mortal ship. We have sometimes thought that surely our praise was confined to the shores of this poor narrow worldthat it was impossible for us to pull the ropes which might ring the bells of Heaventhat we could by no means whatever reach our hands so high as to sweep the celestial chords of angelic harps. We have said to ourselves there is no connection between earth and Heaven.

A huge black wall divides us. A strait of unnavigable waters shuts us out. Our prayers cannot reach to Heaven, neither can our praises affect the celestials. Let us learn from our text how mistaken we are. We are, after all, however much we seem to be shut out from Heaven and from the great universe but a province of Gods vast united empire and what is done on earth is known in Heaven. What is sung on earth is sung in Heaven. And there is a sense in which it is true that the tears of earth are wept again in Paradise and the sorrows of mankind are felt again, even on the Throne of the Most High.

My text tells us, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repents. It seems as if it showed me a bridge by which I might cross over into eternity. It does, as it were, exhibit to me certain magnetic wires which convey the intelligence of what is done here to spirits in another world. It teaches me that there is a real and wonderful connection between this lower world and that which is beyond the skies, where God dwells, in the land of the happy.

We shall talk about that subject a little this morning. My first head will be the sympathy of the world above with the world below. The second, the judgment of the angelsthey rejoice over repenting sinners. We shall see what is their ground for so doing. The third, will be a lesson for the saintsif the angels in Heaven rejoice over repenting sinners, so should we.

I. In the first place, our text teaches us THE SYMPATHY OF THE TWO WORLDS. Imagine not, O Son of Man, that you are cut off from Heaven for there is a ladder, the top whereof does rest at the foot of the Throne of the Almightythe base whereof is fixed in the lowest place of mans misery! Conceive not that there is a great gulf fixed between you and the Father, across which His mercy cannot come and over which your prayers and faith can never leap. Oh, think not, Son of Man, that you dwell in a storm-girt island, cut off from the continent of eternity. I beseech you, believe that there is a bridge across that chasm, a road along which feet may travel.

This world is not separated, for all creation is but one body. And know you, O Son of Man, though you in this world do but dwell, as it were on the foot, yet from the feet even to the head, there are nerves and veins that do unite the whole. The same great heart which beats in Heaven beats on earth. The love of the Eternal Father which cheers the celestial, makes glad the terrestrial, too. Rest assured that though the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another, yet are they but another in appearance, for after all, they are the same. Oh, listen, Son of Man and you will soon learn that you are no stranger in a strange landa homeless Joseph in the land of Egyptshut out from his Father and his children, who still remain in the happy paradise of Canaan.

No, your Father loves you still. There is a connection between you and Him. Strange that though leagues of distance lie between the finite creature and the infinite Creator, yet there are links that unite us both! When a tear is wept by you, think not your Father does not behold. For, Like as a father pities his children so the Lord pities them that fear Him. Your sigh is able to move the heart of Jehovah. Your whisper can incline His ear unto you. Your prayer can stay His hands. Your faith can move His arm. Oh, think not that God sits on high in an eternal slumber, taking no account of you! Shall a mother forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, she may forget, yet will I not forget you.

Engraved upon the Fathers hand your name remains. And on His heart stands your person recorded there. He thought of you before the worlds were made. Before the channels of the sea were scooped, or the gigantic mountains lifted their heads in the white clouds, He thought of you. He thinks of you still. I, the Lord, do keep it. I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro in every place, to show Himself strong on the behalf of all them that fear Him. You are not cut off from Him. You move in Him and in Him you live and have your being. He is a very present help in time of trouble.

Remember, again, O Heir of Immortality, that you are not only linked to the Godhead, but there is another One in Heaven with whom you have a strange, yet near connection. In the center of the Throne sits One who is your Brother, allied to you by blood. The Son of God, eternal, equal with His Father, became in the fullness of time the Son of Mary, an infant of a span long. He was, yes, is, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. Think not that you are cut off from the celestial world, while He is there. For is He not your head and has He not Himself declared that you are a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones? Oh, Man, you are not

separated from Heaven while Jesus tells you   
*I feel at My heart all your sighs and your groans, For you are most near Me, My flesh and My bones. In all your distresses, your Head feels the pain, They all are most needful, not one is in vain.*

Oh, poor, disconsolate Mourner, Christ remembers you every hour. Your sighs are His sighs. Your groans are His groans. Your prayers are His prayers

*He in His measure feels afresh,*

*What every member bears.*   
Crucified He is when you are crucified. He dies when you die. You live in Him and He lives in you and because He lives shall you live alsoyou shall rise in Him and you shall sit together in the heavenly places with Him. Oh, never was husband nearer to his wife and never Head nearer to the members and never soul nearer to the body of this flesh, than Christ is to you. And while it is so, think not that Heaven and earth are divided. They are but kindred worldstwo ships moored close to one another and one short plank of death will enable you to step from one into the other this ship, all black and coaly, having done the coasting trade, the dusty business of today and being full of the blackness of sorrow. And that ship all golden, with its painted pennon flying and its sail all spread, white as the down of the sea bird, fair as the angels wing.

I tell you, Man, the ship of Heaven is moored side by side with the ship of earth and rock though this ship may and careen though she will on stormy winds and tempests, yet the invisible and golden ship of Heaven sails by her side never sundered, never divided, always ready, in order that when the hour shall come, you may leap from the black, dark ship and step upon the golden deck of that thrice happy one in which you shall sail forever!

But, O Man of God, there are other golden links besides this which bind the present to the future and time unto eternity. And what are time and eternity, after all, to the Believer, but like the Siamese twins, never to be separated? This earth is Heaven below, the next world is but a Heaven above. It is the same housethis is the lower room and that the upper, but the same roof covers both and the same dew falls upon each. Remember, Beloved, that the spirits of the just made perfect are never far from you and me if we are lovers of Jesus. All those who have passed the flood still have communion with us. Do we not sing

*The saints on earth and all the dead,   
But one communion make,   
All join in Christ, the living Head,   
And of His grace partake?*

We have but one Head for the Church triumphant and for the Church militant   
*One army of the living God,   
To His command we bow,   
Part of the host have crossed the flood,   
And part are crossing now.*   
Does not the Apostle tell us that the saints above are a cloud of witnesses? After he had mentioned Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Gideon and Barak and Jephthah, did he not say, Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight? Lo, we are running in the plains and the glorified ones are looking down upon us. Your mothers eyes follow you, young man. A fathers eyes are looking down upon you, young woman. The eyes of my godly grandmother, long since glorified, I doubt not, rest on me perpetually. No doubt, in Heaven they often talk of us. Methinks they sometimes visit this poor earththey never go out of Heaven, it is true, for Heaven is everywhere to them. This world is to them but just one corner of Gods Heaven, one shady bower of Paradise.   
The saints of the living God, are, I doubt not, very near unto us, when we think them very far away. At any rate, they still remember us, still look for us. For this is ever upon their heartsthe truth that they without us cannot be made perfect. They cannot be a perfect Church till all are gathered in and therefore do they long for our appearing.   
But, to come to our text a little more minutely. It assures us that the angels have communion with us. Bright spirits, first-born sons of God, do you think of me? Oh, cherubim, great and mighty; seraphim, burning, winged with lightning, do you think of us? Gigantic is your stature. Our poet tells us that the wand of an angel might make a mast for some tall admiral. And doubtless he was right when he said so. Those angels of God are creatures mighty and strong, doing His commandments, hearkening to His wordand do they take notice of us?   
Let the Scripture answer, Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those that shall be heirs of salvation? The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him. For He shall give His angels charge over you; to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. Yes, the brightest angels are but the serving men of the saintsthey are our lackeys and our footmen. They wait upon us. They are the troops of our body guard. And we might, if our eyes were opened, see what Elisha saw horses of fire and chariots of fire round about usso that we should joyously say, More are they that are with us than they that are against us. Our text tells us that the angels of God rejoice over repenting sinners. How is that? They are always as happy as they can behow can they be any happier? The text does not say that they are any happier. But perhaps that they show their happiness more. A man may have a Sabbath every day, as he ought to have if he is a Christian and yet on the first day of the week he will let his Sabbatism come out plainly. For then the world shall see that he does rest. A merry heart has a continual feast. But then even the merry heart has some special days on which it feasts well. To the glorified every day is a Sabbath, but of some it can be said, and that Sabbath was an high day. There are days when the angels sing more loudly than usual. They are always harping well Gods praise, but sometimes the gathering hosts who have been flitting far through the universe come home to their center. And round the Throne of God, standing in serried ranks, marshaled not for battle but for music, on certain set and appointed days they chant the praises of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

And do you ask me when those days occur? I tell you the birthday of every Christian is a sonnet day in Heaven. There are Christmas days in Paradise, where Christs high mass is kept and Christ is glorified not because He was born in a manger, but because He is born in a broken heart. There are daysgood days in Heavendays of sonnet, red letter days, of overflowing adoration. And these are days when the Shepherd brings home the lost sheep upon His shoulder, when the Church has swept her house and found the lost piece of money. For then are these friends and neighbors called together and they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory over one sinner that repents.   
I have thus, I hope, shown you that there is a greater connection between earth and Heaven than any of us dreamed. And now let none of us think, when we look upward to the blue sky, that we are far from Heaven. It is a very little distance from us, when the day comes we shall go posthaste there, even without horses and chariots of fire. Balaam called it a land that is very far off. We know betterit is a land that is very near. Even now   
*By faith we join our hands   
With those that went before.   
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands   
Upon the eternal shore.*   
All hail, bright spirits! I see you now. All hail, angels! All hail, you Brothers and Sisters redeemed! A few more hours, or days, or months and we shall join your happy throng. Till then your joyous fellowship, your sweet compassion shall ever be our comfort and our consolationand having weathered all storms of lifewe shall at last anchor with you within the port of Everlasting Peace.   
II. But the angels are said to sing whenever a sinner repents. Let us see if there is any JUDGMENT IN THEIR SONG, or whether they make a mistake. Why do angels sing over penitent sinners?   
In the first place, I think it is because they remember the days of creation. You know when God made this world and fixed the beams of the heavens in sockets of light, the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. As they saw star after star flying abroad like sparks from the great anvil of Omnipotence, they began to sing. And every time they saw a new creature made upon this little earth, they praised afresh. When first they saw light they clapped their hands and said, Great is Jehovahfor He said Light be! and light was. And when they saw sun and moon and stars, again they clapped their hands and they said, He has made great lights. For His mercy endures forever. The sun to rule the day. For His mercy endures forever. The moon to rule the night. For His mercy endures forever. And over everything He made, they chanted evermore that sweet song, Creator, You are to be magnified. For Your mercy endures forever.   
Now, when they see a sinner returning, they see the creation over again. For repentance is a new creation. No man ever repents until God makes in him a new heart and a right spirit. I do not know that ever since the day when God made the world, with the exception of new hearts, the angels have seen God make anything else. He may, if He has so pleased, have made fresh worlds since that time. But perhaps the only instance of new creation they have ever seen since the first day is the creation of a new heart and a right spirit within the breast of a poor penitent sinner. Therefore do they sing, because creation comes again.   
I doubt not, too, that they sing because they behold Gods works afresh shining in excellence. When God first made the world, He said of it, It is very goodHe could not say so now. There are many of you that God could not say that of. He would have to say the very reverse. He would have to say, No, that is very bad, for the trail of the serpent has swept away your beautythat moral excellence which once dwelt in manhood has passed away. But when the sweet influences of the Spirit bring men to repentance and faith again, God looks upon man and He says, It is very good. For what His Spirit makes is like Himselfgood and holy and precious. And God smiles again over His twice-made creation and says once more, It is very good. Then the angels begin again and praise His name, whose works are always good and full of beauty.   
But, Beloved, the angels sing over sinners that repent because they know what that poor sinner has escaped. You and I can never imagine all the depths of Hell. Shut out from us by a black veil of darkness we cannot tell the horrors of that dismal dungeon of lost souls. Happily, the wailings of the damned have never startled usfor a thousand tempests were but a maidens whisper compared with one wail of a damned spirit. It is not possible for us to see the tortures of those souls who dwell eternally within an anguish that knows no alleviation. These eyes would become sightless balls of darkness if they were permitted for an instant to look into that ghastly shrine of torment.   
Hell is horrible, for we may say of it, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the horrors which God has prepared for them that hate Him. But the angels know better then you or I could guess. They know itnot that they have felt itbut they remember that day when Satan and his angels rebelled against God. They remember the day when the third part of the stars of Heaven revolted against their liege Lord. And they have not forgotten how the red right hand of Jehovah Jesus was wrapped in thunder. They do not forget that breach in the battlements of Heaven when, down from the greatest heights to the lowest depths, Lucifer and his hosts were hurled. They have never forgotten how, with sound of trumpet, they pursued the flying foe down to the gulfs of black despair. And, as they neared that place where the great serpent is to be bound in chains, they remember how they saw Tophet, which was prepared of old, the pile whereof is fire and much wood and they recollect how, when they winged back their flight, every tongue was silent, although they might well have shouted the praise of Him who conquered Lucifer. But on them all there did sit a solemn awe of One who could smite a cherubim and cast him in hopeless bonds of everlasting despair.   
They knew what Hell was, for they had looked within its jaws and seen their own brothers fast enclosed within them. And, therefore, when they see a sinner saved, they rejoicebecause there is one less to be food for the never-dying wormone more soul escaped out of the mouth of the lion.   
There is yet a better reason. The angels know what the joys of Heaven are and therefore they rejoice over one sinner that repents. We talk about pearly gates and golden streets and white robes and harps of gold and crowns of amaranth and all that. But if an angel could speak to us of Heaven, he would smile and say, All these fine things are but childs talk and you are little children and you cannot understand the greatness of eternal bliss and therefore God has given you a childs horn book and an alphabet, in which you may learn the first rough letters of what Heaven is, but what it is you do not know.   
O Mortal, your eye has never yet beheld its splendors. Your ear has never yet been ravished with its melodies. Your heart has never been transported with its peerless joys. You may talk and think and guess and dream, but you can never measure the infinite Heaven which God has provided for His children. And therefore it is, when they see a soul saved and a sinner repenting, that they clap their hands. For they know that all those blessed mansions are theirs, since all those sweet places of everlasting happiness are the entail of every sinner that repents.   
But I want you just to read the text again, while I dwell upon another thought. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. Now, why do they not save their joy till that sinner dies and goes to Heaven? Why do they rejoice over him when he repents? My Arminian friend, I think, ought to go to Heaven to set them right upon this matter. According to his theory, it must be very wrong of them, because they rejoice prematurely. According to the Arminian doctrine a man may repent and yet he may be lost. He may have grace to repent and believe and yet he may fall from grace and be a castaway. Now, Angels, dont be too fast. Perhaps you may have to repent of this one day, if the Arminian doctrine is true. I would advise you to save your song for greater joys. Why, Angels, perhaps the men that you are singing over today, you will have to mourn over tomorrow. I am quite sure that Arminius never taught his doctrine in Heaven. I do not know whether he is thereI hope he is but he is no longer an Arminian. If he ever taught his doctrine there, he would be put out. The reason why angels rejoice is because they know that when a sinner repents, he is absolutely savedor else they would rejoice prematurely and would have good cause for retracting their merriment on some future occasion.   
But the angels know what Christ meant when He said, I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. And therefore they rejoice over repenting sinners, because they know they are saved.   
There is yet one more fact I will mention, before I leave this point. It is said that the angels rejoice over one sinner that repents. Now this evening it shall be my happy privilege to give the right hand of fellowship to no less than forty-eight sinners that have repented and there will be great joy and rejoicing in our Churches tonight because these forty-eight have been immersed on a profession of their faith. But how loving are the angels to men. For they rejoice over one sinner that repents. There she is, in that garret where the stars look between the tiles. There is a miserable bed in that room, with but one bit of covering and she lies there to die! Poor creature! Many a night she has walked the streets in the time of her merriment. But now her joys are overa foul disease, like a demon is devouring her heart!

She is dying fast and no one cares for her soul! But there, in that chamber, she turns her face to the wall and she cries, O You that saved Magdalene, save me! Lord I repent! Have mercy upon me, I beseech You. Did the bells ring in the street? Was the trumpet blown? Ah, no. Did men rejoice? Was there a sound of thanksgiving in the midst of the great congregation? No. No one heard it. For she died unseen. But stop! There was one standing at her bedside, who noted well that tearan angel, who had come down from Heaven to watch over this stray sheep and mark its return. And no sooner was her prayer uttered than he clapped his wings and there was seen flying up to the pearly gates a spirit like a star. The heavenly guards came crowding to the gate, crying, What news, O Son of Fire? He said, Tis done. And what is done? they said, Why, she has repented. What? She who was once a chief of sinners? Has she turned to Christ? Tis even so, said he. And then they told it through the streets and the bells of Heaven rang marriage peals, for Magdalene was saved and she who had been the chief of sinners was turned unto the living God.   
It was in another place. A poor neglected little boy in ragged clothing had run about the streets for many a day. Tutored in crime, he was paving his path to the gallows. But one morning he passed by a humble room where some men and women were sitting together teaching poor ragged children. He stepped in there a wild Bedouin of the streets. They talked to him, they told him about a soul and about an eternitythings he had never heard before. They spoke of Jesus and of good tidings of great joy to this poor friendless lad. He went another Sabbath. And another. His wild habits hanging about him, for he could not get rid of them.   
At last it happened that his teacher said to him one day, Jesus Christ receives sinners. That little boy ran, but not home, for it was but a mockery to call it sowhere a drunken father and a lascivious mother kept a hellish riot together. He ran and under some dry arch, or in some wild unfrequented corner, he bent his little knees and there he criedthat poor creature in his ragsLord save me, or I perish. And the little Arab was on his kneesthe little thief was saved! He said   
*Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Your bosom fly.* And up from that old arch, from that forsaken hovel, there flew a spirit, glad to bear the news to Heaven, that another heir of glory was born to God. I might picture many such scenes. But will each of you try to picture your own? You remember the occasion when the Lord met with you. Ah, little did you think what a commotion there was in Heaven! If the Queen had ordered out all her soldiers, the angels of Heaven would not have stopped to notice them. If all the princes of earth had marched in pageantry through the streets, with all their robes and jewelry and crowns and all their regalia, their chariots and their horsemenif the pomps of ancient monarchs had risen from the tombif all the might of Babylon and Tyre and Greece had been concentrated into one great paradeyet not an angel would have stopped in his course to smile at those poor tawdry things. But over you, the vilest of the vile, the poorest of the poor, the most obscure and unknownover youangelic wings were hoveringand concerning you it was said on earth and sung in HeavenHallelujah, for a child is born to God today.   
III. And now I must conclude with this LESSON TO THIS SAINTS. I think Beloved, it will not be hard for you to learn. The angels of Heaven rejoice over sinners that repentSaints of God, will not you and I do the same? I do not think the Church rejoices enough. We all grumble enough and groan enough. But very few of us rejoice enough. When we take a large number into the Church it is spoken of as a great mercy. But is the greatness of that mercy appreciated? I will tell you who they are that can most appreciate the conversion of sinners. They are those that are just converted themselves, or those that have been great sinners themselves. Those who have been saved themselves from bondage, when they see others coming who have so lately worn the chains, are so glad that they can well take the tabret and the harp and the pipe and the psaltery and praise God that there are other prisoners who have been emancipated by grace. But there are others who can do this better still and they are the parents and relations of those who are saved. You have thanked God many times when you have seen a sinner saved. But, Mother, did not you thank Him most when you saw your own son converted?   
Oh, those holy tears! They are not tearsthey are Gods diamondsthe tears of a mothers joy, when her son confesses his faith in Jesus. Oh, that glad countenance of the wife, when she sees her husband, long bestial and drunken at last made into a man and a Christian! Oh, that look of joy which a young Christian gives when he sees his father, who had long oppressed and persecuted him, converted. I was preaching this week for a young minister and being anxious to know his character, I spoke of him with apparent coolness. An estimable lady of his congregation in a very few moments began to warm in his favor.   
She said, You must not say anything against him, Sir. If you do, it is because you do not know him. Oh, I said, I knew him long before you did. He is not much, is he? Well, she said, I must speak well of him, for he has been a blessing to my servants and family. I went out into the street and saw some men and women standing about. So I said to them, I must take your minister away. If you do, they said, we will follow you all over the world, if you take away a man who has done so much good to our souls. After collecting the testimony of fifteen or sixteen witnesses, I said, If the man gets such witnesses as these, let him go on. The Lord has opened his mouth and the devil will never be able to shut it. These are the witnesses we wantmen who can sing with the angels because their own households are converted to God.   
I hope it may be so with all of you. And if any of you are yourselves brought to Christ todayfor He is willing to receive youyou will go out of this place singing and the angels will sing with you. There shall be joy in earth and joy in Heavenon earth peace and glory to God in the highest. The Lord bless you one and all, for Jesus sake.

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A HIGH DAY IN HEAVEN   
NO. 2791

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, AUGUST 10, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 27, 1878.

**Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:10.**

EARTH has engrossed our thoughts too long. It is time that we should lift our eyes and look upward to Heaven. Do you say that you cannot see as far as that? Look again and ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, for the Lord Jesus has set the gate wide open that you may at least get a glimpse of what is going on in the Glory Land. He has plainly declared to you many of the things which He has seen and heard of the Fatherand if you will only give good heed to His words, you shall be enabled, by the eye of faith, to see what to mortal eyes is invisible!

Gaze thus upon the scene depicted in our text. They have an eternal Sabbath in Heaven, but the Sabbath of which our text speaks is, evidently, a specially high day. They have all holy days there, but now it is a holiday as well as a holy day, for there is some special cause for unusual joy! What is it all about? Our Lord tells us that there is joyvery special joy in the presence of the angels of Godand He tells us what is the cause of it. Let us draw near and see for ourselves this great sight and seek to learn its lessons. The heavenly harpers are evoking from their golden harps even sweeter music than usual! They are lifting up their voices as high as even their exalted notes can possibly rise. We will listen to them, but we will also remember the reason for their jubilation. We are told, by our Lord, the special joy in the presence of the angels of God is over one sinner who repents.

Now, you workers for the Master, you sweepers in the dust looking for the lost pieces of money! You candle-holders who have been shedding your feeble rays as far as you canand who have become somewhat wearynow come and refresh yourselves by looking upon some of the results of your service! And you, who in imitation of the great, good, Chief Shepherd, have gone after the lost sheep and are scratched by many a briar and tired after your many desperate leaps over hill and daleforget your weariness for a whileand begin to share in the joy of Christs servants as you see how, before the Throne of God on high, they are making merry over the souls that are being saved! I do not think that anything can be more comforting to you who are serving the Lord than to see what comes of your service. You, who have been going forth weeping, bearing precious seedwipe your eyes and look aboveand begin to anticipate the time when you shall come again with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you, for, up yonder they are shouting, Harvest home! with great delight!

And while I thus invite the working saint, I would equally invite the seeking sinner to note the cause of this special joy of Heaven. It is about persons like yourselves! O you wandering sheep, the joy is over wandering sheep that have been found by the Divine Shepherd! O prodigal sons, the merriment is over sons who were dead, but who are alive again wanderers who were lost, but now are found! It should, surely, encourage you to hasten home while yet the joy-bells are ringing and the dance is going on! Get home as quickly as you can, for, as they are rejoicing over one Brother or Sister like yourself, everything will be in readiness for welcoming you and the Father will only need to say, Let us keep up the feast, for here is another of My children that I had lost, but who now is found. It is evidently a propitious seasona time in which bright hopes ought to be kindled within you and the birds within your soul should begin to sing in sweet anticipation of the bliss awaiting you! Arise, then, and go to your FatherHe is rejoicing over those who have come back to Himand He will equally rejoice over you!

I. In considering this passage, I shall ask you, first, to NOTE THE TERMS IN WHICH OUR LORD JESUS DESCRIBES THIS HEAVENLY JOYThere is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

And notice, first, in these terms, that this joy is over one sinner. What the joy is over hundreds, thousands and millions of sinners, you can scarcely imagine, but Jesus tells us that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner. That one may be a poor servant girl, or a working man whose name will never be known to fameand there is only onebut the angels are not so sparing of the praises of God that they will wait till there is a score of penitents! They see them gathering Home one by one and they are glad of every opportunity of expressing their special delight at the increasing number of the redeemed. So, as they come to Jesus, one by one, the blessed spirits before the Throne of God begin to sing with special thanksgiving for every sinner saved. Have you taught for a long time in your Sunday school class and have you had only one girl saved? Do not be satisfied with that one, but, at the same time, do not forget to thank the Lord for that one. If you are not grateful to God for letting you win one soul for Him, you are not likely to be allowed to win another. Remember that the conversion of one sinner is, in Heaven, reckoned to be such a marvel that it makes special joy there in the presence of the angels of God!

Surely, then, the salvation of even one soul ought to make your spirit exult and rejoice with exceeding joy! If you have lived to bring one sinner to Christ, you have not lived in vain. Has not God already given to you in that one, my dear Brother, my dear Sister, much more than such an unworthy creature as you might ever have expected to gain? I say again, cry for more blessing, be greedy to win hundreds of souls for the Savior, but, still, do not neglect to praise God for the one whom He has already saved.

I like to dwell upon the thought that the person who caused this melody in Heaven was one sinner. I do not know what sort of a sinner that one was, but I should not wonder if the conversion of special sinners makes special joy up there. Was that one sinner a publican, a hardhearted Jewish tax-gatherer? Was that one sinner a harlot, lost even to society as well as to her God? We do not know, but we do know that as they would rejoice in Heaven over one king, or one prince, or one senator, or one philosopher who repentedso they would over one publican or one harlot! The angels and the redeemed in Glory know that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. They know that the precious blood of Christ was shed to cleanse sinners from every stain of sin. They know that the sweetest singers throughout eternity will be those who once were sinners, so they rejoice over any and every sinner who is saved! Out of a certain company of a hundred, there were 99 people who had not gone astrayaccording to their notionsand the spirits in Heaven did not rejoice over them. No, you mere moralists, you people who are so excellent in your own esteem who reckon that you will gain admission to Heaven by your own good deeds, you will never make the angels sing until you repent! But the poor lost sinner, however deeply he has plunged into crime, when he becomes a monument of the saving and renewing Grace of God, sets all the golden harps ringing with the melodious music of praise and thanksgiving unto the Most High!

Notice, next, that the rejoicing is over one sinner who repents. To repent is to be sorry for sinto undergo a complete change of mind, heart and lifeto turn away from self to Christ. In a word, to be converted, that is, turned completely around. Yet many people, nowadays, think very little of repentance. Some ministers whom I know scarcely even mention it in their preaching, so that their hearers may well imagine that it is out of date. They seem to believe in a kind of faith that ignores repentance. Well, they differ very much in their estimate from that of the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, for they rejoice over one sinner who repents. The poor sinner has not yet the faith that moves mountains, or the heroism that takes lions by their beards and slays them. The poor sinner has not yet preached a sermon, or even sung a hymn to the praise of Godhe has simply sat down in some obscure corner and wept over his sin! He has returned to his God and said, Father, I have sinned. But that was sufficient to make the angels sing!

I want you to remember this, you who are just beginning to come to Christyou who have only a little Gracethe very faintest evidence of the work of Gods Spirit in your soul. You are Believers, or else you would not be penitents, for there is no true repentance but that which is accompanied by faith! But the most prominent thing is not so much your faith as your holy mourning and moaning over sin, your sincere desire after holinessthis is the proof of that change of mind which is the essence of true repentanceand this is such a work of Grace that there is joy over you in the presence of the angels of God!

I want you also to notice, with regard to the terms used by our Lord, that He says, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God. Is there not always joy there? Certainly! Is there ever any sorrow up yonder in the courts of the Most High? Do cherubim and seraphim ever pine and cry, and sigh in agony? Never! Then, what can this joy be which makes Heaven even more joyous than it usually is? I do not know whether you or I can conceive what it must bewhat I may call the ordinary, everyday joy of Heaven is perfect, yet there is something over and above that in this rejoicing over penitents. It is a bliss above bliss! A joy that rises out of joy like some huge Atlantic billow that towers above all the rest of the waves. They have a special, extra, doubly distilled joy in Heaven, sometimes, and that comes to them whenever one sinner repents! I think I can explain it a little by an expression of Rutherfords, in which he says, God is my witness that my own Heaven would be seven heavens if I could but see you saved. If I could but see souls brought to Christ, my own bliss would be sevenfold bliss. Yes, and so it is with the spirits before the Throne of God! They are always happy, but, sometimes the joy that is always full begins to overflow and down from the celestial hills there rushes a sacred torrent that carries all before it! And this unusual delight of those who are in the presence of God is caused by one sinner repenting and returning to the Lord!

I have only one more remark to make under this first head, and it is thisour Lord does not say that the angels rejoice over one sinner who repents, but that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Who, then, has the joy? The angels, of course, first. They must be included because the previous parable says that when the Shepherd comes home, He calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. The redeemed from among men and the holy angels are the friends and neighbors of Christand they all rejoice over every sinner who repents. But, first of all, this joy is the joy of God, Himself. The angels and the redeemed stand in His Presencethey are His courtiers but He Himself is the center, and Glory, and Lord of Allit is God Himself who rejoices over one sinner who repents. God the Father rejoices, for has He not found His child whom He had lost, the child whom He loved, before the foundation of the world, with all the love of His infinite heart?

God the Son rejoices, for has He not found the sheep which the Father gave Himthe sheep which He was pledged to bring safely homethe sheep for which He paid the purchase price in His own hearts bloodthe sheep which, though it had wandered far away from Him, He had brought home? God the Spirit also rejoices, for did He not see, in the souls repentance, the fruit of His working, the result of His enlightenment, the consequence of His convicting and the commencement of the whole work of sanctification? Yes, dear Brothers and SistersFather, Son and Spiritthe one God of the spiritual Israelrejoices greatly over one sinner who repents. I can hardly convey to you the delight that I have in this thought! God is always full of joy. He is rightly called the happy God, yet even He describes Himself as being, in some mysterious manner, more happy at one season than at another! I am, of course, speaking after the manner of men, but, then, we are only men and we can only speak after our own manner as the prophet Zephaniah does when he says, He will rejoice over you with joy. He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing. So that repentance of one sinner gives joy to the Eternal, Himself! Who would not, then, repent of sin and so give joy to God and, at the same time, find the highest joy for himself?

Thus I have noticed the terms in which our Lord Jesus describes this heavenly joy.   
II. Now, secondly, I want you, very briefly, to CONSIDER THE REASONS WHY THERE IS THIS JOY IN HEAVEN.   
First, God rejoices over every sinner who repents, because He then sees one of His creatures delivered from the horrible power of sin. God is full of benevolence toward men. He wills not the death of the sinner and He is delighted when the creature, whom He has made, becomes happy because he has become holy. He is glad when those, whom He has fashioned, enjoy the delights which He intended for them.   
God rejoices, too, when a sinner repents, because He then sees, not only one of His creatures, but a new creature in Christ Jesus. He sees His own handiwork in that heart. We all like to see our own work when it is well done. Nobody wants to see bad work, but every worker rejoices in good work. And God rejoices in the good work of regeneration, the good work of the renewal of the heart, restoration from death and rescue from Hell.

Especially does God delight in every sinner who repents, because He then sees His own child restored to Him. He who has the heart of a true father knows what joy he has when he sees his boy, who has gone astray, coming back againwhen he returns from the distant land to which he went in an ill humor, and comes home weeping and mourning, but loving and gentle and anxious to be better. Thus God rejoices over His returning children. There is no earthly father who can love as God lovesand if all the love of all the fathers in the world were made into one, it would not equal the love which God has for even one of His children! So He rejoices with peculiar joy when He sees any of His children repenting and returning to Him.   
Moreover, God always rejoices in everything that is holy and good and, therefore, He rejoices in a sinners repentance. It is a right and holy thing that a sinner should repent of doing wrong. It is the beginning of something higher, nobler and better when a soul comes to the turning point, confesses its lost condition and seeks to be set right. And, therefore, because the Lord is good and righteous, He will teach transgressors His ways and when He sees them walking in that way, He will rejoice and be glad concerning them!   
III. I will not remind you of all the reasons for the great Fathers joy over returning sinners because you can all think them out for yourselves. But I will, instead, say a little about THE JOY OF THE ANGELS OVER REPENTING SINNERS. Why is it that they, who are the friends, neighbors and servants of Christ, are so glad when sinners repent? They are not themselves sinnersthey are not even men! They have no part in the great redemption of Christ. For verily He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. Why, then, do the angels rejoice over repenting sinners?   
Well it is, first, because they are so fully in sympathy with God. Whatever pleases God, pleases them. The growth of holiness delights the Most High and, therefore, it delights His loyal courtiers. The coming back of Jehovahs wandering children gladdens Him and it, therefore, gladdens every servant in the family. You can see, in the parable, that the servant who went out to speak to the elder brother had his measure of joy over the prodigals return. He speaks in happy and grateful tonesand the spirits before the Throne of God cannot help being glad when God is glad. Will loyal subjects be sighing and crying when their king has a day of special rejoicing and is peculiarly honored? It cannot be! And the angels would not be what they arethe true and faithful servitors of God if they were not glad when God is glad!   
But besides that, they also have great sympathy with men. It would be worth your while to study the subject of the friendship of angels to men their kindly feeling, the joy with which they have often brought Gods messages to men, the delight with which they have interposed, at critical times, to accomplish the miraculous designs upon which God has sent them on behalf of men. They are, indeed, most gracious spirits! We must not worship themwe are forbidden to do thatfor we must worship God alone. But we may feel an intense amity, friendship and respect towards those bright and blessed spirits. What we owe to them, we shall never know, I suppose, till eternity. And then we shall set it all down to the Glory of their Master and ours! Still, he who thinks well of God may think well of Gods holy angels on the principle of, Love Me, love My servants. Does He not give them charge over us, to keep us in all our ways? Do they not bear us up in their hands, lest we should dash our foot against a stone? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? They are not actually akin to us, but still, they are very near neighbors to us and they are very kind and helpful neighbors! So, when they see a soul saved, they are right glad of it.   
Further, they know better than you and I do, what a soul is saved from when a sinner repents. They have looked over the battlements of Heaven into the dread abyssthey recollect the day when there was war in Heaven and the mighty Son of God overthrew Satan and his rebel followers and cast them down to Hell. The holy angels know that it was Gods electing love that enabled them to stand fast in that evil day. They know, too, that God passed by the fallen angels and never gave them a hope of recovery, or promised them a Mediator. Yet they do not envy men because God, in the Sovereignty of His Grace, has provided for them a Savior. They rejoice to know that repenting men shall never be cast into the Lake of Fire, the awful place prepared for the devil and his angels. They have none of the modern infidel notions, for they have seen that there is a worm that dies not and a fire that cannot be quenched, so they lift up their songs right gladly whenever a sinner is saved from going down into the Pit!

Besides this, the angels know what repenting sinners gain, for they have long frequented the golden streets and walked by the river of the Water of Life. They know the bliss of beholding Christ face to facehave they not done so ever since He returned to Heaven to sit upon His Fathers Throne? When a man is very happy because he is very holy, he wants other people to be happy, too, and he feels all the happier the more there are to share in his joy. Our proverb The more, the merrier, just expresses what the angels think, so they rejoice, with the utmost gladness, over those who repent because they know that, for them, there is laid up in Heaven the triple crown of life, glory and righteousness, that fades not away.

One thought I cannot help interjecting just here. I am sure that these holy angels all believe in the Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints. If they did not, they would be very foolish in rejoicing over repenting sinners. The old proverb bids us not to count our chickens before they are hatchedand if I were an Arminian, I would recommend the angels to not rejoice over a sinner who repents, for he might fall from Grace and perishand then they would have to ring the bells of Heaven backwards, or to toll them, and to recall their songs, and say, We rejoiced too soon. But it is not so, for they know that repentance has in it the germ of perfection! Sincere repentance is the commencement of perfect sanctification and God will make it grow to full fruition! This grain of mustard seed will become a great tree and yonder birds of Paradise shall sit in the branches and sing to Gods praise forever! So they begin to sing even now because they know what true repentance guarantees concerning the future of everyone who truly repents and believes in Christ Jesus!

Thus I have tried to give, in as brief a space as I could, the reasons for the joy of God and the joy of Gods servants, the angels, over repenting sinners. There are just two lessons I want each one of us to learn and then I have done.

The first is a lesson of self-examination. Are you and I fit for Heaven? Have we the nature which would fit us to dwell in the presence of the angels of God? You say, Well, you have set us a hard task. No, I have not. Or if so, I will help you through it. The angels rejoice over one sinner who repents. Do you rejoice over repenting sinners? Having yourself repented, do you feel intense sympathy for other sinners? Do you dread lest they should be lost? Do you pray that they may be saved? Do you seek, by your personal testimony and entreaty, to bring them to Christ? Can you truthfully say that it would be Heaven on earth to you to see your children convertedyour servants convertedyour neighbors converted? Alas, there are many professors who do not care the turn of a halfpenny whether souls are lost or saved! Their one desire is to be saved themselves, but, as to doing anything to spread the Gospel of Jesus denying themselves that the poor and ignorant may know of Christthat is not in their line at all!

But, Sir, if you have no concern about another mans soul, it is time that you should have grave concern about your own! If no joy comes to you when another is saved, you have need to be saved yourself! And if the thought of the future world and the ruin of immortal souls never makes you bow your head even to the dust, you need to be born-again, for they who are born in the likeness of Christ weep over sinners, pray for sinners and seek the salvation of sinners! By this test, I beseech you to try yourselves. There is not one among us who may not well chide himself for some measure of hardness of heart and indifference about this matter. I often feel as if I could flog myself and bite my tongue, to think that I preach so often with dry eyes and with a heart that is not half as earnest as it ought to be. Yet I have heard colder sermons than I generally preach, so I suppose that my Brothers must be partakers in my fault, or else their manner much belies them. And I think I know some members of the church who must make a similar confession to mine. Oh, that we were all alive to the real value of an immortal soul! Did we but believe that it is born for eternal bliss, or doomed to eternal despair, I think that we would go about as with a sword in our bones, mourning because of the multitude of mankind rushing madly upon Jehovahs buckler, dashing themselves against the bosses of His shield and seeming determined to commit spiritual suicide! God save them! Let us pray that prayer from our inmost souls. If we do not, how can we hope to ever enter that Heaven where they rejoice over repenting sinners?

The other lesson is for any of you who are seeking Christ Jesus the Lord. I gave it to you at the commencement of the sermon. I want to give it to you again that you may be sure to remember it. How gladly, how heartily, how immediately ought you to hasten to seek peace with God when you know how joyously you will be welcomed! If it will make Heaven all the gladder to see you come, why do you not come? I have read, sometimes, in the newspaper, an advertisement to this effectA. B. or somebody else whose initials are given, is earnestly entreated to come back to his loving father and mother. All is forgiven. Everything is made right. Do not delay! Come back to us at once. If I were to read such an advertisement as that, and it referred to me, I do not think I could have the heart to stand out against it. I would be thinking of my father, What? Does the old man want me as much as that? I would be thinking of my brother, Does he want to see me? I would think even of the old servant of the family, Does old Mary want to see me? She who nursed me when I was a child, does she want me back? Well, with such an invitation, I will go at once. Dear Heart, do you want to come back to God? That is a sign that the Lord wants you back! You will be glad to get back to Him, but He will be gladder to receive you than you will be to be received! And all the angels want youthey are watching and waiting for you. And those on earth who love our Lord, are, many of them, very anxious about you. The whole Church of God in Heaven and on earth, and the goodly fellowship of the angels, and God Himself, will all be glad to receive you! Come and welcome! Come and welcome! I wish I had a trumpet-tongue that I might sound the invitation out still more loudly! Remember that verse with which we began the service

*From the Cross uplifted high   
Where the Savior deigns to die,   
What melodious sounds I hear,   
Bursting on my ravished ear!   
Loves redeeming work is done;   
Come and welcome, Sinner, come.*

You have but to trust Him and you have come to Himto rely upon Himto depend upon Himto lean upon Himto cast yourself upon Him, to believe in Christ Jesus, who died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to Godfor, as soon as you do so, you are brought back to the great Fathers house. May the Divine Spirit bring you there now, for His loves sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**LUKE 15.**

Verse 1. Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners to hear Him. However sunken they might be, they knew their best Friend! They recognized their Benefactor, so they gathered around Him. They knew who it was that smiled upon them and who would lift them up, so they came clustering around Him, like bees fly to the flowers. Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners to hear Him.

2. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receives sinners, and eats with them. Where bees come, wasps often come, too. This murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes was after their nature they were so proud, so wrapped up in themselves, they thought so contemptuously of everybody else that they dared even to despise Him whose shoelaces they were not worthy to unloose. This Man, they said, receives sinners, and eats with them.

3. And He spoke this parable unto them, saying. This is really a picture in three panelsa parable with three variations.  
4-7. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over 99 just persons which need no repentance. There, no doubt, the Savior looked at the Pharisees, who, though they did need repentance, yet thought they did not. Little or no joy did they ever bring to HimHis heart never leaped with delight over them. Good as they thought themselves to be, they did not yield Him as much joy as these poor publicans and sinners would when He had found themand He was bent on doing that. Now, Beloved, how much is a man better than a sheep? And if a shepherd will leave all his ease and comfort to hunt after one stray sheep, how ought you and I, after the example of the Son of Man, to be ready for any service, or any self-denial by which we, too, in our poor measure, may seek and save the lost? Now we have the second panel of the picture   
8-10. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she loses one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house, and search diligently till she finds it And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Did the woman rejoice at finding her piece of silver, that she had lost, and shall not God much more rejoice over an inestimably precious human soul which had been lost, but which, through Grace, is found again? Ah, yes, there is joy in Heaven! There is joy in all heavenly hearts! There is joy in all who are the friends of Christ when lost ones are found! There was another quiet stroke at the Pharisees and scribes who were proved not to be the friends of the soul-seeking Savior because they did not rejoice with Him over those whom He had found. If they had been at all like the angels in Heaven, as they thought they were, they would have been glad that the Lord Jesus Christ had come to seek and to find the lost. Then came the third most touching panel of the pictureperhaps the best beloved of all the parablesone which, like a key, fits the locks of the human heart and many a time has opened the heart.   
11-13. And He said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. It is clear that his heart had gone away from his father before he went away. He would not have wished to take from his father his portion of goods, or to be independent of his father, if he had not felt a spirit of alienation and, therefore, what his father did, developed the latent evil, just as, oftentimes, the loving mercy of God brings to the surface the concealed sin which is in man all the while and then he sins the more openly. It is a grievous thing that even Divine Love should lead us to sinnot of itself, but because of our evil naturejust as the sun shines, not that it may make the weeds grow, or that it may help to lift into the air noxious odors! With goodwill, itself, as its only motive, ill may come even of the pure sunlight.   
14, 15. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in need. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. A very degrading employment for him as a Jewperhaps, however, the best that the citizen of that country could do for him, for there was a famine in the land. And when men are all pinched with hunger, it is not much that one can do for another. And what can one poor sinner do for another? Even though he is called a priest and puts on fine apparel, yet what can he do for his fellow sinner?   
16, 17. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. But no man gave any unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I, his son, perish with hunger, when there is not only enough in my fathers house for his children, but for his hirelings, too! Yes, and some to spare after that. Bread enough and to spare. This was the thought which drew the prodigal homeand it ought to draw sinners to Christ. There is, in the Gospel, bread enough and to spare. You know how some would, if they could, contract the provisions of Grace and make it out that there is bread enough, but they say that if there is anything to spare, it will be a waste. Why, it is that spare bread that is Gods bait to catch poor souls with when they are cast down, for, they say, if it is to spare, then, even if my father is angry with me, he will not deny me the spare bread for which there is no use, so I may as well go and ask for a portion of it.   
18-20. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Oh, the speed of Divine Love! There were delays with the son, but there were no delays with the father. At the first glance, the fathers heart is made up and he runs to meet his returning child. And what a welcome he gives him! He kissed him much, is the right rendering. Truly, this was prodigal love for the prodigal son!   
21, 22. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. But the fatherStopping him short and forever obliterating the rest of the prayer, so that he never had time to utter it, seeing that it was too legal to be permitted by his fathers love. But the father   
22-25. Said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field. At work, like the good son that he was.   
25. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. Which he did not often hear, for he was of a gloomy spirit, and there had not been cause for much rejoicing lately.   
26. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. What are you all up to in making such a noise? What new thing has happened to our orderly household to make it thus full of merrymaking and noisy gladness?   
27, 28. And he said unto him, Your brother is come and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. And he was angry. It did not seem to him right that one who had acted so badly should be thus honored. He was angry   
28. And would not go in. He did not believe in revivals, so he would not attend them. He did not believe in many being converted, especially if they had been great sinners. He would have nothing to do with them.   
28. Therefore came his father out and entreated him. Oh, the goodness of the father, not only in receiving the returning prodigal, but in entreating this indignant and erring son, for he was greatly erring in this matter and was not showing the true spirit of a son.   
29, 30. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years have I served 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: but as soon as this your son was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf. I am a consistent Christian. I have maintained the excellence of my moral character. I have tried to be orthodox and attentive to all religious duties. You know that it is so, yet I seldom have any joy in my religion. You never gave me a kid. I go trembling and mourning all my days. I get very little delight out of my religion, yet here is one just converted, and all this fuss is made over him and he is rejoicing, too. You feast him with the best fatted calf. He is as glad as glad can be, and everybody is glad about him but nobody seems to take much notice of me. I go on my steady quiet course and I have never caused you such grief as this your son has done.

31. And he said unto himSo beautifully   
31. Son, you are always with me and all that I have is yours. And that is what the Lord seems to say to the Believer when he gets into that naughty spirit of the elder brother and does not like to hear of sinners of the deepest dye being brought to Christand who disapproves of the jubilation and excitement at revival times. The Lord says to him, Suppose you have not had such enjoyments? You may have them if you like, for you are always with Me. There is joy enough in that fact and all that I have is yours. You are joint-heir with Me. I have given you everything what more do you want?  
32. And it was meetIt was fitting, it was proper.   
32. That we should make merry, and be glad: for this, your brother. For he is your brother. Notwithstanding your richer experience and your deeper Christian knowledge, and your high standing in the church, this poor prodigal, who is just saved, is your brother! So it is meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this, your brother   
32. Was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK508, 473, 509.  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1000 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

NUMBER ONE THOUSANDOR, BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE   
NO. 1000

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 16, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! Luke 15:17.**

HE came to himself. The word may be applied to one waking out of a deep swoon. He had been unconscious of his true condition, and he had lost all power to deliver himself from it. But now he was coming round again, returning to consciousness and action. The voice which shall awaken the dead aroused him. The visions of his sinful trance all disappearedhis foul but fascinating dreams were gone. He came to himself. Or the word may be applied to one recovering from insanity. The prodigal son had played the madman, for sin is madness of the worst kind. He had been demented, he had put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitterdarkness for lightand light for darkness.

He had injured himself, and had done for his soul what those possessed of devils in our Saviors time did for their bodies when they wounded themselves with stones, and cut themselves with knives. The insane man does not know himself to be insane. But as soon as he comes to himself he painfully perceives the state from which he is escaping. Returning, then, to true reason and sound judgment, the prodigal came to himself.

Another illustration of the word may be found in the old world fables of enchantmentwhen a man was disenthralled from the magicians spell he came to himself. Classic story has its legend of Circe, the enchantress, who transformed men into swine. Surely this young man in our parable had been degraded in the same manner. He had lowered his manhood to the level of the brutes. It should be the property of man to have love to his kindred, to have respect for right, to have some care for his own interest. This young man had lost all these proper attributes of humanity, and so had become as the beast that perish.

But as the poet sings of Ulyssesthat he compelled the enchantress to restore his companions to their original formso we see here the prodigal returning to manhood, looking away from his sensual pleasures and commencing a course of conduct more consistent with his birth and parentage. There are men here today, perhaps, who are still in this swoon. O God of Heaven arouse them! Some here who are morally insane. May the Lord recover them, the Divine Physician put His cooling hand upon their fevered brow, and say to themI will. Be you made whole.

Perhaps there are others here who have allowed their animal nature to reign supreme. May He who destroys the works of the devil deliver them from the power of Satan and give them power to become the sons of God. He shall have all the glory! It appears that when the prodigal came to himself he was shut up to two thoughts. Two facts were clear to him

there was plenty in his fathers house, and that he himself was famishing.

May the two kindred spiritual facts have absolute power over all your hearts, if you are yet unsaved! For they were most certainly all-important and pressing truths. These are no fancies of one in a dream. No ravings of a maniac. No imaginations of one under fascinationit is most true that there is plenty of all good things in the Fathers house, and that the sinner needs them. Nowhere else can Divine Grace be found or pardon gained. But with God there is plenitude of mercylet none venture to dispute this glorious Truth.

Equally true is it that the sinner without God is perishing. He is perishing now. He will perish everlastingly. All that is worth having in his existence will be utterly destroyed, and he himself shall only remain as a desolation. The owl and the bittern of misery and anguish shall haunt the ruins of his nature forever and forever. If we could shut up unconverted men to those two thoughts, what hopeful congregations we should have! Alas, they forget that there is mercy only with God, and fancy that it is to be found somewhere else. And they try to slip away from the humbling fact of their own lost estate, and imagine that perhaps there may be some back door of escape.

They imagine that, after all, they are not so bad as the Scripture declares, or that perhaps it shall be right with them at the last, however wrong it may be with them now. Alas, my Brethren, what shall we do with those who willfully shut their eyes to truths of which the evidence is overwhelming, and the importance overpowering? I earnestly entreat those of you who know how to approach the Throne of God in faith to breathe the prayer that He would now bring into captivity the unconverted heart, and put these two strong fetters upon every unregenerate soul.

There is abundant Grace with Godthere is utter destitution with themselves. Bound with such fetters, and led into the Presence of Jesus, the captive would soon receive the liberty of the children of God. I intend only to dwell this morning, or mainly, upon the first thought, the master thought as it seems to me, which was in the prodigals mindthat which really constrained him to sayI will arise and go to my father.

It was not, I think, the home-bringing thought that he was perishing with hunger but the impulse towards his father found its mainspring in the consideration, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare! The plenty, the abundance, the superabundance of the fathers house was that which attracted him to return home. And many, many a soul has been led to seek God when it has fully believed that there was abundant mercy with Him.

My desire this morning shall be to put plainly before every sinner here the exceeding abundance of the Grace of God in Christ Jesushoping that the Lord will find out those who are His sons, and that they may catch at these words, and as they hear of the abundance of the bread in the Fathers house, may say, I will arise and go to my Father.

I. First, then, let us consider for a short time THE MORE THAN ABUNDANCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS IN THE FATHERS HOUSE. What do you need this morning, awakened Sinner? Of all that you need, there is, with God, an all-sufficient, a superabounding supplybread enough and to spare. Let us prove this to you. First, consider the Father Himself. Whoever shall rightly consider the Father will at once perceive that there can be no stint to mercy, no boundary to the possibilities of Divine Grace.

What is the Nature and Character of the Supreme? Is He harsh or loving? asks one. The Scripture answers the question, not by telling us that God is loving, but by assuring us that God is Love. God Himself is Love. It is His very Essence. It is not that love is in God, but that God Himself is Love. Can there be a more concise and more positive way of saying that the love of God is infinite? You cannot measure God Himself. Your conceptions cannot grasp the grandeur of His attributes. Neither can you tell the dimensions of His love, nor conceive the fullness of it.

Only understand this that high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His ways higher than your waysand His thoughts than your thoughts. His mercy endures forever. He pardons iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage. He retains not His anger forever because He delights in mercy. You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon You. Your mercy is great above the heavens. The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

If Divine Love alone should not seem sufficient for your salvation, remember that with the Father to whom the sinner returns there is as much of wisdom as there is of Grace. Is your case a very difficult one? He that made you can heal you. Are your diseases strange and complex? He that fashioned the ear, can He not remove its deafness? He that made the eye, can He not enlighten it if it is blind? No mischief can have happened to you but what He, who is your God, can recover you from it. Matchless wisdom cannot fail to meet the intricacies of your case. Neither can there be any failure of power with the Father.

Do you not know that He who made the earth and stretched out the heavens like a tent to dwell in, has no boundary to His strength, nor limit to His might? If you need Omnipotence to lift you up from the slough into which you have fallen, Omnipotence is ready to deliver youif you cry to the Strong for strength. Though you should need all the force with which the Creator made the worlds, and all the strength with which He bears on the pillars of the universeall that strength and force should be laid out for your goodif you would believingly seek mercy at the hand of God in Christ Jesus.

None of His power shall be against you. None of His wisdom shall plan your overthrow. But love shall reign in all, and every attribute of God shall become subservient to your salvation. Oh, when I think of sin I cannot understand how a sinner can be saved! But when I think of God, and look into His heart, I understand how readily He can forgive. Look into His heart, asks one? How can we do that? Has He not laid bare His heart to you? Do you inquire where He has done this? I answer, yonder upon Calvarys Cross. What was in the very center of the Divine heart? What, but the Person of the Well-Beloved, His only begotten Son?

And He has taken His Only Begotten and nailed Him to the Cross, because, if I may venture so to speak, He loved sinners better than His Son. He spared not His Son, but He spares the sinner. He poured out His wrath upon His Son and made Him the Substitute for sinners that He might lavish love upon the guilty who deserved His anger. O Soul, if you are lost, it is not from any want of Divine Grace, or wisdom, or power in the Father. If you perish, it is not because God is hard to move or unable to save! If you are a castaway, it is not because the Eternal refused to

hear your cries for pardon or rejected your faith in Him! On your own head is your blood if your soul is lost. If you starve, you starve because you will starve. For in the Fathers House there is bread enough and to spare.

But, now, consider a second matter which may set this more clearly before us. Think of the Son of God, who is, indeed, the true Bread of Life for sinners. Sinner, I return to my personal address. You need a Savior, and you may well be encouraged when you see that a Savior is provided provided by Godsince it is certain He would not make a mistake in the provision. But consider who the Savior is! He is, Himself, God! Jesus who came from Heaven for our redemption was not an angel, else might we tremble to trust the weight of our sin upon Him.

He was not mere man, or He could but have suffered as a substitute for one, if indeed for one. But He was very God of very Godin the beginning with the Father. And does such a One come to redeem? Is there room to doubt as to His ability, if that is the fact? I do confess this day that if my sins were ten thousand times heavier than they are, yes, and if I had all the sins of this crowd in addition piled upon me, I could trust Jesus with them all at this moment now that I know Him to be the Christ of God!

He is the mighty God, and by His pierced hands the burden of our sins is easily removed. He blots out our sins. He casts them into the depths of the sea. But think of what Jesus, the Son of God, has done. He who was God, and thus blessed forever, left the Throne and royalties of Heaven and stooped to yonder manger. There He lies. His mother wraps Him in swaddling clothes. He hangs upon her breast. The Infinite is clothed as an infant! The Invisible is made manifest in flesh! The Almighty is linked with weakness, for our sakes. Oh, matchless stoop of condescension! If the Redeemer God does this in order to save us, shall it be thought a thing impossible for Him to save the vilest of the vile?

Can anything be too hard for Him who comes from Heaven to earth to redeem? Pause not because of astonishment, but press onward! Do you see Him, who was God over all, blessed forever, living more than thirty years in the midst of the sons of men, bearing the infirmities of manhood, taking upon Himself our sicknesses, and sharing our sorrowsHis feet weary with treading the acres of Palestine? Look at His body faint oftentimes with hunger and thirst, and laborHis knees knit to the earth with midnight prayerHis eyes red with weeping (for oftentimes Jesus wept), tempted in all points like as we are!

Matchless spectacle! An Incarnate God dwells among sinners, and endures their contradiction! What Glory flashed forth ever and anon from the midst of His lowliness! A glory which should render faith in Him inevitable. You who walked on the seaYou who did raise the deadit is not rational to doubt Your power to forgive sins! Did You not Yourself put it so when you bade the man take up his bed and walk? Which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven you. Or to say, Rise up and walk? Assuredly He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by HimHe was able even here on earth in weakness to forgive sinsmuch more now that He is seated in His Glory!

He is exalted on high to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins. But, ah, the master proof that in Christ Jesus there is bread enough and to spare, is the Cross! Will you follow me a moment? Will you follow HIM, rather, to Gethsemane? Can you see the bloody sweat as it falls upon the ground in His agony? Can you think of His scourging before Herod and Pilate? Can you trace Him along the Via Dolorosa of Jerusalem? Will your tender hearts endure to see Him nailed to the tree, and lifted up to bleed and die?

This is but the shell. As for the inward kernel of His sufferings no language can describe it, neither can conception peer into it. The everlasting God laid sin on Christand where the sin was laid there fell the wrath. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief. Now He that died upon the Cross was Gods only begotten Son. Can you conceive a limit to the merit of such a Saviors death? I know there are some who think it necessary to their system of theology to limit the merit of the blood of Jesusif my system of theology needed such a limitation, I would cast it to the winds!

I cannot! I dare not allow the thought to find a lodging in my mind! It seems so near akin to blasphemy. In Christs finished work I see an ocean of meritmy plummet finds no bottommy eyes discover no shore. There must be sufficient efficacy in the blood of Christ, if God had so willed it, to have saved not only all this world, but ten thousand worlds, had they transgressed the Makers Law. Once admit infinity into the matter, and limit is out of the question! Having a Divine Person for an offeringit is not consistent to conceive of limited valueboundaries and measure are terms inapplicable to the Divine Sacrifice.

The intent of the Divine purpose fixes the application of the infinite offering, but does not change it into a finite work. In the Atonement of Christ Jesus there is bread enough and to spare. Even as Paul wrote to Timothy, He is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe.

But now let me lead you to another point of solemnly joyful consideration, and that is the Holy Spirit. To believe and love the Trinity is to possess the key of theology. We spoke of the Father, we spoke of the Son. Let us now speak of the Holy Spirit. We do Him all too little honor, for the Holy Spirit condescends to come to earth and dwell in our hearts. And notwithstanding all our provocations He still abides within His people.

Now, Sinner, you need a new life and you need holiness, for both of these are necessary to make you fit for Heaven. Is there a provision for this? The Holy Spirit is provided and given in the Covenant of Grace. And surely in Him there is enough and to spare. What cannot the Holy Spirit do? Being Divine, nothing can be beyond His power. Look at what He has already done. He moved upon the face of chaos, and brought it into order. All the beauty of creation arose beneath His molding breath.

We ourselves must confess with Elijah, The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life. Think of the great deeds of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when men unlearned spoke with tongues of which they knew not a syllable before! And the flames of fire upon them were also within them, so that their hearts burned with zeal and courage to which they, up to then, had been strangers. Think of the Holy Spirits work on such a one as Saul of Tarsus. That persecutor foams bloodhe is a very wolf! He would devour the saints of God at Damascus and yet, within a few moments, you hear him say, Who are You, Lord? and yet again, Lord, what will you have me to do?

His heart is changed! The Spirit of God has newly created it. The adamant is melted in a moment into wax. Many of us stand before you as the living monuments of what the Holy Spirit can do. And we can assure you from our own experience, that there is no inward evil which He cannot overcome, no lustful desire of the flesh which He cannot subdue, no obduracy of the affections which He cannot melt.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Surely no sinner can be beyond the possibilities of mercy when the Holy Spirit condescends to be the Agent of human conversion. O Sinner, if you perish, it is not because the Holy Spirit lacks power, or the blood of Jesus lacks efficacy, or the Father fails in love. It is because you believe not in Christ, but do abide in willful rebellion, refusing the abundant Bread of Life which is placed before you.

A few rapid sentences upon other things, which will go to show, still further, the greatness of the provision of Divine Mercy. Observe well that throughout all the ages God has been sending one Prophet after another, and these Prophets have been succeeded by Apostlesand these by martyrs and confessors, and pastors and Evangelists, and teachers. All these have been commissioned by the Lord in regular succession. And what has been the message they have had to deliver? They have all pointed to Christ, the great Deliverer!

Moses and the Prophets all spoke of Him, and so have all truly Godsent ambassadors. Do you think, Sinner, that God has made all this fuss about a trifle? Has He sent all these servants to call you to a table insufficiently furnished? Has He multiplied His invitations through so long a time to bid you and others come to a provision which is not, after all, sufficient for them? Oh, it cannot be! God is not mocked! Neither does He mock poor needy souls. The stores of His Mercy are sufficient for the

utmost emergencies *Rivers of love and mercy here   
In a rich ocean join.   
Salvation in abundance flows,   
Like floods of milk and wine.   
Great God, the treasures of Your love   
Are everlasting mines,   
Deep us our helpless miseries are,   
And boundless as our sins.*

Recollect, again, that God has been pleased to stake His honor upon the Gospel. Men desire a name, and God also is jealous of His Glory. Now what has God been pleased to select for His name? Is it not the conversion and salvation of men? When instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, and instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. And do you think God will get a name by saving little sinners by a little Savior?

Ah, His great name comes from washing out stains as black as Hell, and pardoning sinners who were foulest of the foul. Is there one monstrous rebel here who is qualified to glorify God greatly because his salvation will be the wonder of angels and the amazement of devils? I hope there is. O you most degraded, black, loathsome Sinner nearest to being a damned sinnerif this voice can reach youI challenge you to come and prove whether Gods mercy is not a match for your sin!

You Goliath Sinner, come here! You shall find that God can slay your enmity and make you yet His friend, and even more, His loving and adoring servant, because great forgiveness shall secure great love. Such is the greatness of Divine Mercy, that where sin abounded, Grace does much more abound. Do you think, again, O Sinner, that Jesus Christ came out of Heaven to do a little deed, and to provide a slender store of mercy? Do you think He went up to Calvary, and down to the grave, and all, that He might do a commonplace thing, and provide a stinted, narrow, limited salvation, such as your unbelief would imagine His redemption to be?

No! We speak of the labors of Herculesthose are childs play compared with the labors of Christ who slew the lion of Hell! He turned purifying streams through the Augean stables of mans sin, and cleansed themand performed ten thousand miracles besides! And will you so depreciate Christ as to imagine that what He has accomplished is, after all, little, so little that it is not enough to save you?

If it were in my power to single out the man who has been the most dishonest, most licentious, most drunken, most profanein three words, most earthly, sensual, devilishI would repeat the challenge which I gave just now and bid him draw near to Jesus, and see whether the Fountain filled with Christs atoning blood cannot wash him white. I challenge him at this instant to come and cast himself at the dear Redeemers feet and see if Jesus will say, I cannot save you, you have sinned beyond My power.

It shall never, never, never be, for He is able to the uttermost to save. He is a Savior, and a great one. Christ will be honored by the grandeur of the Grace which He bestows upon the greatest of offenders. There is in Him pardon enough and to spare. I must leave this point, but I cannot do so without adding that I think BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE might be taken for the motto of the Gospel. I believe in particular redemption, that Christ laid down His life for His sheep. But, as I have already said, I do not believe in the limited value of that redemptionhow else could I dare to read the words of John, He is the Propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sine of the whole world?

There is a sure portion for His own elect, but there is also over and above to spare. I believe in the electing love which will save all its objectsbread enough. But I believe in boundless benevolence, Bread enough and to spare. We, when we have a purpose to accomplish, put forth the requisite quantity of strength and no more, for we must be economical. We must not waste our limited store. Even charity gives the poor man no more than he absolutely needs. But when God feeds the multitude, He spreads the board with imperial bounty. Our water cart runs up and down the favored road, but when Heavens clouds would favor the good mans fields, they deluge whole nations, and even pour themselves upon the sea.

There is no real waste with God. But at the same time there is no stint. BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPAREwrite that inscription over the House of Mercy, and let every hungry passerby be encouraged to enter in and eat.

II. We must now pass on to a second consideration, and dwell very briefly on it. According to the text, there was not only bread enough in the house, but THE LOWEST IN THE FATHERS HOUSE ENJOYED ENOUGH AND TO SPARE. We can never make a parable run on all fours, therefore we cannot find the exact counterpart of the hired servants. I understand the prodigal to have meant thisthat the very lowest menial servant employed by his father had bread to eat, and had bread enough and to

spare.

Now, how should we translate this? Why, Sinner, the very lowest creature that God has made, that has not sinned against Him, is well supplied and has abounding happiness. There are adaptations for pleasure in the organizations of the lowest animals. See how the gnats dance in the summers sunbeam! Hear the swallows as they scream with delight when on the wing. He who cares for birds and insects will surely care for men! God who hears the ravens when they cry, will He not hear the returning penitent?

He gives these insects happinessdid He mean me to be wretched? Surely He who opens His hands and supplies the need of every living thing will not refuse to open His hands and supply my needs if I seek His face. Yet I must not make these lowest creatures to be the hired servants. Whom shall I then select among men? I will put it thusthe very worst of sinners that have come to Christ have found Grace enough and to spare. And the very least of saints who dwell in the House of the Lord find love enough and to spare. Take, then, the most guilty of sinners and see how bountifully the Lord treats them when they turn unto Him.

Did not some of you, who are yourselves unconverted, once know persons who were at least as bad, perhaps more outwardly immoral than yourselves? Well, they have been converted, though you have not been. And when they were converted, what was their testimony? Did the blood of Christ avail to cleanse them? Oh, yes. And more than cleanse themfor it added to beauty not their own. They were naked oncewas Jesus able to clothe them? Was there a sufficient covering in His righteousness? Ah, yes! And adornment was superadded. They received not a bare apparel, but a royal raiment!

You have seen others thus liberally treateddoes not this induce you, also, to come? Some of us need not confine our remarks to others, for we can speak personally of ourselves. We came to Jesus as full of sin as ever you can be and felt ourselves, beyond measure, lost and ruined. But, oh, His tender love! I could sooner stand here and weep than speak to you of it. My soul melts in gratitude when I think of the Infinite Mercy of God to me in that hour when I came seeking mercy at His hands. Oh, why will you not also come? May His Holy Spirit sweetly draw you!

I proved that there was bread enough, mercy enough, forgiveness enough, and to spare. Come along, come along, poor guilty One! Come along, there is room enough for you! If the chief of sinners bears this witness, so do the most obscure of saints. If we could call forth from his seat a weak Believer in God, one who is almost unknown in the Church one who sometimes questions whether he is, indeed, a child of God, and he would be willing to be a hired servant so long as he might belong to Godand if I were to ask him, How, after all, how has the Lord dealt with you? what would be his reply?

You have many afflictions, doubts and fears, but have you any complaints against your Lord? When you have waited upon Him for daily Grace, has He denied you? When you have been full of troubles, has He refused you comfort? When you have been plunged in distress, has He declined to deliver you? The Lord Himself asks, Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? Testify against the Lord, you His people, if you have anything against Him! Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, whoever there is in Gods service who has found Him a hard Taskmaster, let him speak! Among the angels before Jehovahs Throne, and among men redeemed on earthif there is anyone that can say he has been dealt with unjustly or treated with ungenerous churlishness, let him lift up his voice!

But there is not one. Even the devil, himself, when he spoke of God and of His servant Job, said, Does Job serve God for nothing? Of course he did notGod will not let His servants serve Him for nothing! He will pay them superabundant wages and they shall all bear witness that at His table there is bread enough and to spare. Now, if these still enjoy the bread of the Fathers House, these who were once great sinners, these who are now only very commonplace saints, surely, Sinner, it should encourage you to say, I will arise and go to my Father, for His hired servants have bread enough and to spare.

III. Notice in the third place, that the text dwells upon THE MULTITUDE OF THOSE WHO HAVE BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE. The prodigal lays an emphasis upon that word, How many hired servants of my fathers. He was thinking of their great number, and counting them over. He thought of those that tended the cattle, of those that went out with the camels, of those that watched the sheep, those that minded the corn, and those that waited in the house. He ran them over in his mind his father was great in the land, and had many servants. Yet he knew that they all had of the best food enough and to spare.

Why should I perish with hunger? I am only one at any rate. Though my hunger seems insatiable, it is but one belly that has to be filled, and, lo, my father fills hundreds, thousands every day! Why should I perish with hunger? Now, O you awakened Sinner, you who feel your sin and misery this morning, think of the numbers upon whom God has bestowed His Grace already. Think of the countless hosts in Heavenif you were introduced there today, you would find it as easy to tell the stars, or the sands of the sea, as to count the multitudes that are before the Throne even now.

They have come from the east and from the west, and they are sitting down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacoband there is room enough for you! And beside those in Heaven, think of those on earth. Blessed be God, His elect on earth are to be counted by millions, I believe, and the days are comingbrighter days than thesewhen there shall be multitudes upon multitudes brought to know the Savior, and to rejoice in Him. The Fathers love is not for a few only, but for an exceeding great companya number that no man can number will be found in Heaven!

Now, a man can number a very great amount. Set to work your Newtons, your calculatorsthey can count great numbersbut God, and God, alone, can tell the multitude of His redeemed. Now, Sinner, you are but one at any rate, great Sinner as you are, and the mercy of God which embraces millions must have room enough in it for you. The sea which holds the whales and creeping things innumerabledo you say, It will overflow its banks if I bathe in it? The sun which floods the universe with light, can you say, I should exhaust his beams if I should ask him to enlighten my darkness?

Say not so. If you come to yourself you will not tolerate such a thought, but you will remember with hope the richness of the Fathers Divine Grace, even though your own poverty stares you in the face. Let us add a few words to close withclose grappling words to some of you to whom God has sent His message this morningand whom He intends to save.

O you who have been long hearers of the Gospel, and who know it well in theory, but have felt none of the power of it in your heartslet me now remind you where and what you are! You are perishing. As the Lord lives, there is but a step between you and death! But a step, no, but a breath between you and Hell!

Sinner, if at this moment your heart should cease its beating and there are a thousand causes that might produce that result before the clock ticks againyou would be in the flames of Divine wrath! Can you bear to be in such peril? If you were hanging over a rock by a slender thread which must soon break, and if you would then fall headlong down a terrible precipice, you would not sleep, but be full of alarm. May you have sense enough, wit enough, Divine Grace enough, to be alarmed until you escape from the wrath to come!

Remember, however, that while you are perishing, you are perishing in sight of plenty. You are famishing where a table is abundantly spread. What is more, there are those whom you know now sitting at that table and feasting. What sad perversity for a man to persist in being starved in the midst of a banquet where others are being satisfied with good things! But I think I hear you say, I fear I have no right to come to Jesus. I will ask you thishave you any right to say that till you have been denied!

Did you ever try to go to Christ? Has He ever rejected you? If, then, you have never received a denial, why do you wickedly imagine that He would deny you? Wickedly, I say, for it is an offense against the Christ who opened His heart upon the Cross to imagine that He could deny a penitent. Have you any right to say, But I am not one of those for whom mercy is provided? Who told you so? Have you climbed to Heaven and read the secret records of Gods election? Has the Lord revealed a strange decree to you, and said, Go and despair, I will have no pity on you? If you say that God has so spoken, I do not believe you!

In this sacred Book is recorded what God has said. Here is the sure Word of Testimony, and in it I find it said of no humble seeker that God has shut him out from His Grace. Why have you a right to invent such a fiction in order to secure your own damnation? Instead, there is much in the Word of God and elsewhere to encourage you in coming to Christ. He has not repelled one sinner yet! That is good to begin withit is not likely that He would, for since He died to save sinners, why should He reject them when they seek to be saved?

You say, I am afraid to come to Christ. Is that wise? I have heard of a poor navigator who had been converted, who had but little education, but who knew the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when dying, very cheerfully and joyfully longed to depart. His wife said to him, But, mon, aint you afeared to stand before the Judge? Woman, said he, why should I be afeared of a Man as died for me? Oh, why should you be afraid of Christ who died for sinners? The idea of being afraid of Him should be banished by the fact that He shed His blood for the guilty. You have much reason to believe from the very fact that He died, that He will receive you.

Besides, you have His Word for it, for He says, Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast outfor no reason, and in no way, and on no occasion, and under no presence, and for no motive. I will not cast him out, says the original. Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. You say it is too good to be true that there can be pardon for youthis is a foolish measuring of Gods corn with your bushel! Because it seems too good a thing for you to receive, do you fancy it is too good for God to bestow? Let the greatness of the Good News be one reason for believing that the news is true, for it is so like God

*Who is a pardoning God like You?   
Or who has Grace so rich and free?*   
Because the Gospel assures us that He forgives great sins through a

great Savior, it looks as if it were true since He is so great a God. What should be the result of all this with every sinner here at this time? I think this Good News should arouse those who have almost gone to sleep through despair. The sailors have been pumping the vessel, the leaks are gaining, she is going down, the captain is persuaded she must be a wreck. Depressed by such evil tidings, the men refuse to work. And since the boats are all stove in and they cannot make a raft, they sit down in despair. Presently the captain has better news for them. She will float, he says. The wind is abating, the pumps tell upon the water, the leak can be reached yet.

See how they workwith what cheery courage they toil on, because there is hope! Soul, there is hope! There is hope! THERE IS HOPE! To the harlot, to the thief, to the drunkard there is hope! There is no hope, says Satan. Liar that you are, get back to your denfor YOU there is no hope! But for fallen man, though he is in the mire of sin up to his very neck. Though he is at the gates of deathwhile he lives there is hope! There is hope for hopeless souls in the Savior.

In addition to arousing us this ought to elevate the sinners thoughts. Some years ago there was a crossing-sweeper in Dublin, with his broom, at the corner, and in all probability his highest thoughts were to keep the crossing clean, and look for the pence. One day a lawyer put his hand upon his shoulder, and said to him, My good fellow, do you know that you are heir to a fortune of ten thousand pounds a year? Do you mean it? said he. I do, he said. I have just received the information. I am sure you are the man.

He walked away, and he forgot his broom. Are you astonished? Why, who would not have forgotten a broom when suddenly made possessor of ten thousand a year? So I pray that some poor sinners who have been thinking of the pleasures of the world, when they hear that there is hope and that there is Heaven to be hadwill forget the deceitful pleasures of sin, and follow after higher and better things.

Should it not also purify the mind? The prodigal, when he said, I will arise and go to my father, became, in a measure, reformed from that very moment. How, you say? Why, he left the swine troughmorehe left the wine cup, and he left the harlots. He did not go with the harlot on his arm and the wine cup in his hand, and say, I will take these with me, and go to my father. It could not be. These were all left, and though he had no goodness to bring, yet he did not try to keep his sins and come to Christ.

I shall close with this remark, because it will act as a sort of caveat, and be a fit word to season the wide invitations of the free Gospel. Some of you, I fear, will make mischief even out of the Gospel and will dare to take the Cross and use it for a gibbet for your souls. If God is so merciful, you will go, therefore, and sin the more. And because Divine Grace is freely given, therefore you will continue in sin that Grace may abound. If you do this, I would solemnly remind you I have no Grace to preach to such as

you.   
Your damnation is just. It is the Word of Inspiration, and the only one   
I know that is applicable to such as you are. But every needy, guilty soul  
that desires a Savior is told today to believe in Jesus, that is, trust in the   
Substitution and Sacrifice of Christ. Trust Him to take your sin and blot it   
out. Trust Him to take your soul and save it! Trust Christ entirely, and  
you are forgiven this very moment! You are saved this very instant, and   
you may rejoice now in the fact that being justified by faith, you have   
peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord!   
O come! Come! Come! Come and welcome! Come now to the Redeemers   
blood! Holy Spirit, compel them to come in, that the House of Mercy may   
be filled. Amen and Amen!

[THE reader, if a believer in Christ, is requested to unite with the preacher in praising the Lord for Grace abundantly given in connection with these sermons. This is the thousandth of the series of sermons which we have published consecutively week by week, and of which the circulation has continued to increase. These discourses have, many of them, been reprinted in the United States and have also been translated into German, French, Swedish, Dutch, Italian, and Welsh. Some of them have also been issued in the Hungarian, Russian, Danish, Spanish Telugu, Malagasay, Maori, and Gaelic tongues. Of their effect by the blessing of Gods Spirit, thousands in Heaven, and in all parts of the earth, are joyful witnesses. If we did not praise God for such mercy the stones would cry out!]

[And almost to the day, 130 years later, this request form this editorif you or someone you know has come, by His Grace, to a saving knowledge of our Master, Jesus Christ, from reading this or any of Brother Spurgeons sermons in this modern English format, please let the person or ministry where you got this sermon knowso they may rejoice with you and praise our God for His amazing Grace!]

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THE PRODIGALS CLIMAX   
NO. 2414

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, MAY 26, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
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**When he came to himself.   
Luke 15:17.**

THERE are different stages in the sinners history and they are worth marking in the prodigals experience. There is, first, the stage in which the young man sought independence from his father. The younger son said, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. We know something of that state of mind and, alas, it is a very common one! As yet there is no open profligacy, no distinct rebellion against God. Religious services are attended, the fathers God is held in reverence, but in his heart the young man desires a supposed libertyhe wishes to cast off from all restraint. Companions hint that he is too much tied to his mothers apron string. He, himself, feels that there may be some strange delights which he has never enjoyed and the curiosity of Mother Eve to taste the fruit of that tree which was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, comes into the young mans mindand he wishes to reach out his hand and take the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that he may eat thereof. He never intends to spend his substance in riotous living, but he would like to have the opportunity of spending it as he likes. He does not mean to be a profligate, still, he would like to have the honor of choosing what is right on his own account. At any rate, he is a man, nowhe feels his blushing honors full upon him and he wants, now, to exercise his own freedom of will and to feel that he, himself, is really his own master! Who, indeed, he asks, is Lord over him?

Perhaps there are some to whom I am speaking who are just in such a state as thatif so, may the Grace of God arrest you before you go any further away from Him! May you feel that to be out of gear with Godto wish to be separated from Him and to have other interests than those of Him who made youmust be dangerous and probably will be fatal! Therefore, now, even now, may you come to yourself at this earliest stage of your history and also come to love and rejoice in God as the prodigal returned to his father!

Very soon, however, this young man in the parable entered upon quite another stage. He had received his portion of goodsall that he would have had at his fathers death he had turned into ready moneyand there it was. It is his own and he may do what he pleases with it. Having already indulged his independent feeling towards his father and his wish to have a separate establishment altogether from him, he knew that he would be freer to carry out his plans if he did so right away. Anywhere near his father there is a check upon himhe feels that the influence of his home somewhat clips his wings. If he could get into a far country, there he would have the opportunity to developand all that evolution could do for him, he would have the opportunity of enjoyingso he gathers all together and goes into the far country.

It may be that I am addressing some who have reached that stage. Now there is all the delirium of self-indulgence. Now it is all gaiety, a short life and a merry one, forgetting the long eternity and a woeful one! Now the cup is full and the red wine sparkles in the bowl. As yet, it has not bitten you like a serpent, nor stung you like an adder, as it will do all too soonjust now it is the deadly sweetness that you taste and the exhilaration of that drugged chalice that deceives you. You are making haste to enjoy yourself! Sin is a dangerous joy, beloved all the more because of the danger, for, where there is a fearful risk, there is often an intense pleasure to a daring heart and you, perhaps, are one of that venturous band, spending your days in folly and your nights in righteousness.

Before long there comes a third stage to the sinner as well as to the prodigalthat is when he has, spent all. We have only a certain amount of spending money, after all. He who has gold without limit, yet has not health without limit! Or if health does not fail him in his sinning, yet desire fails and satiety comes in as it did with Solomon when he tried this way of seeking happiness. At last there is no honey left, there is only the sting of the bee! At last there is no sweetness in the cup, there is only the delirium that follows the intoxication! At last the meat is eaten to the bone and there is nothing good to come out of that boneit contains no marrow, the teeth are broken with itand the man wishes that he had never sat down to so terrible a feast! He has reached the stage at which the prodigal arrived when he had spent all. Oh, there are some who spend all their character, spend all their health and strength, spend all their hope, spend all their uprightness, spend everything that was worth having! They have spent all! This is another stage in the sinners history and it is very apt to lead to despair, deeper sin and, sometimes, to that worst of sins which drives a man red-handed before the bar of his Maker to account for his own blood!

It is a dreadful state to be in, for there comes at the back of it a terrible hunger. There is a weary labor to get something that may stay the spirit, a descending to the degradation of feeding swine, a willingness to eat of the husks that swine eat, yet an inability to do so! Many have felt this craving that cannot be satisfied. But, for my part, I am glad when the rakes progress has reached this point, for often, in the Grace of God, it is the way home for the prodigal! It is a roundabout way, but it is the way home for him! When men have spent all and poverty has followed on their recklessnessand sickness has come at the call of their vicethen it is that Omnipotent Grace has stepped inand there has come another stage in the sinners history of which I am now going to speak, as God may help me. That is the point the prodigal had reached, when he came to himself.

I. Then, first, A SINNER IS BESIDE HIMSELF.   
While a man is living in his sin, he is out of his mind, he is beside himself. I am sure that it is so. There is nothing more like madness than sin and it is a moot point among those who study deep problems, how far insanity and the tendency to sin go side by side, and whereabouts it is that great sin and entire loss of responsibility may touch each other. I do not intend to discuss that question at all, but I am going to say that every sinner is morally and responsibly insane and, therefore, in a worse condition than if he were only mentally insane.   
He is insane, first, because his judgment is altogether out of order. He makes fatal mistakes about all-important matters. He reckons a short time of this mortal life to be worth all his thoughts and he puts eternity into the background. He considers it possible for a creature to be at enmity against the Creator, or indifferent to Him, and yet to be happy! He fancies that he knows better what is right for him than the Law of God declares. He dreams that the everlasting Gospel, which cost God the life of His own Son, is scarcely worthy of his attention at all, and he passes it by with contempt. He has unshipped the rudder of his judgment and steers towards the rocks with awful deliberationand seems as if he would wish to know where he can find the surest place to commit eternal shipwreck! His judgment is out of order.   
Further, his actions are those of a madman. This prodigal son, first of all, had interests apart from his father. He must have been mad to have conceived such an idea as that! For me to have interests apart from Him who made me and keeps me alivefor me, the creature of an hour, to fancy that I can have a will in opposition to the will of God, and that I can so live and prosperwhy, I must be a fool! I must be mad to wish any such thing, for it is consistent with the highest reason to believe that he who yields himself up to Omnipotent Goodness must be in the track of happiness, but that he who sets himself against the Almighty Grace of God must certainly be kicking against the pricks to his own wounding and hurt! Yet this sinner does not see that it is so and the reason is that he is beside himself.   
Then, next, that young man went away from his home, though it was the best home in all the world. We can judge that from the exceeding tenderness and generosity of the father at the head of it and from the wonderful way in which all the servants had such entire sympathy with their master. It was a happy homewell stored with all that the son could needyet he quits it to go, he knows not where, among strangers who did not care a straw for him and who, when they had drained his purse, would not give him even a penny with which to buy bread to save him from starving! The prodigal must have been mad to act like that and for any of us to leave Him who has been the dwelling place of His saints in all generations, to quit the warmth and comfort of the Church of God which is the home of joy and peaceis clear insanity! Anyone who does this is acting against his own best interestshe is choosing the path of shame and sorrow, he is casting away all true delighthe must be mad.   
You can see that this young man is out of his mind because, when he gets into the far country, he begins spending his money riotously. He does not lay it out judiciously. He spends his money for that which is not bread and his labor for that which satisfies notand that is just what the sinner does. If he is self-righteous, he is trying to weave a robe out of the worthless material of his own works. And if he is a voluptuary, given up to sinful indulgence, what vanity it is for him to hope for pleasure in the midst of sin! Should I expect to meet with angels in the sewers? With heavenly light in a dark mine? No, these are not places for such things as those, and can I rationally look for joy to my heart from reveling, chambering, wantonness and such conduct? If I do, I must be mad! Oh, if men were but rationaland they often wrongly suppose that they areif they were but rational beings, they would see how irrational it is to sin! The most reasonable thing in the world is to spend life for its own true design and not to fling it away as though it were a pebble on the seashore.

Further, the prodigal was a fool, he was mad, for he spent all. He did not even stop half-way on the road to penury, but he went on till he had spent all! There is no limit to those who have started in a course of sin. He that stays back from it, by Gods Grace, may keep from it, but it is with sin as it is with the intoxicating cup. One said to me, the other day, I can drink much, or I can drink none, but I have not the power to drink a little, for if I begin, I cannot stop myself, and may go to any length. So is it with sin, Gods Grace can keep you abstaining from sin, but, if you begin sinning, oh, how one sin draws on another! One sin is the decoy or magnet for another sin, and draws it on, and one cannot tell, when he begins to descend this slippery slide, how quickly and how far he may go! Thus the prodigal spent all in utter recklessness and, oh, the recklessness of some young sinners whom I know! And, oh, the greater recklessness of some old sinners who seem resolved to be damned, for, having but a little remnant of life, left, they waste that last fragment of it in fatal delay!   
Then it was, dear Friends, when the prodigal had spent all, that he still further proved his madness! That would have been the time to go home to his father, but, apparently, that thought did not occur to him. He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, still overpowered by the fascination that kept him away from the one place where he might have been happyand that is one of the worst proofs of the madness of some of you who frequent these courts, that though you know about the great God and His infinite mercy, and know something of how much you need Him and His Grace, yet you still try to get what you need somewhere else and do not go back to Him!   
I shall not have time to say much more upon this point, but I must remind you that, like sinners, the prodigal had the ways of a madman. I have had, at times, to deal with those whose reason has failed them, and I have noticed that many of them have been perfectly sane, and yet wise and clever, on all points except one. So is it with the inner. He is a famous politician, just hear him talk! He is a wonderful man of business see how sharply he looks after every penny! He is very judicious in everything but thishe is mad on one pointhe has a fatal monomania, for it concerns his own soul!   
A madman will often conceal his madness from those around himso will a sinner hide his sin. You may talk with this man about morals and you may watch him very closelyyet it may be a long time before you can figure him out and be able to say to him, One thing you lack. Perhaps, all of a sudden, you touch that weak point, and there he stands, fully developed before you, far gone in his insanity! He is right enough, elsewhere, but with regard to his soul his reason is gone!   
Mad people do not know that they have been mad till they are cured they think that they, alone, are wise, and all the rest are fools. Here is another point of their resemblance to sinners, for they, also, think that everybody is wrong except themselves. Listen how they will abuse a pious wife as a fool! What hard words they will use towards a gracious daughter! How they will rail at the ministers of the Gospel and try to tear Gods Bible to pieces! Poor mad souls, they think all are mad except themselves! We, with tears, pray God to deliver them from their delusions and to bring them to sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in their right minds.   
Sometimes the sinner will be seen and known to be mad because he turns on his best friends, as madmen do. Those whom they otherwise would have loved the most, they reckon to be their worst enemies. So God, who is mans best Friend, is most despised, and Christ, who is the Friend of sinners, is rejected, and the most earnest Christians are often the most avoided or persecuted by sinners.   
Mad people sometimes, too, will rave, and then you know what dreadful things they will say. So is it with sinners when their fits are on them. I dare not speak of what they will do and what they will say. They often pull themselves up, afterwards, and feel ashamed to think that they should have gone so far. Yet it is so, for they are beside themselves, even as the prodigal was.   
I will not dwell longer on this sad fact because I want to speak on the next and brighter part of my theme.   
II. Secondly, IT IS A BLESSED THING WHEN THE SINNER COMES TO HIMSELF. When he came to himself. This is the first mark of Grace working in the sinner as it was the first sign of hope for the prodigal.   
Sometimes, this change occurs suddenly. I was greatly charmed, this week, by meeting with one to whom this happened. It was an old fashioned sort of conversion with which I was delighted. There came into this building, some three months ago, a man who had not, for a long time, gone to any place of worship. He despised such things. He could swear and drink, and do worse things. He was careless, godless, but he had a mother who often prayed for him, and he had a brother who is, I believe, here, tonight, whose prayer has never ceased for him. He did not come here to worshiphe came just to see the preacher whom his brother had been hearing for so many years. But, coming in, somehow he was no sooner in the place than he felt that he was unfit to be here, so he went up into the top gallery, as far back as he could, and when some friend beckoned him to take a seat, he felt that he could not do sohe must just lean against the wall at the back.   
Someone else invited him to sit down, but he would not. He felt that he had no right to do so. And when the preacher announced his text, [See Sermon #1949, Volume 33A Sermon for the Worst Man on Earth

Read/download entire sermon at http://www.spurgeongems.org .]And the publican,

standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinnerand said something like this, You that stand farthest off in the Tabernacle and dare not sit down because you feel your guilt to be so greatyou are the man to whom God has sent me, this morningand He bids you come to Christ and find mercy, a miracle of love was worked! Then, he came to himself, as he will tell us, soon, at the Church meeting when he comes forward to confess his faith. I rejoiced greatly when I heard of it, for in his case there is a change that everybody who knows him can see! He has become full of a desire after everything that is gracious as once he practiced everything that was bad! Now that is what sometimes happens and why should it not happen, again, tonight? Why should not some other man, or some woman, come to himself or to herself tonight? This is the way homefirst to come to yourselfand then to come to your God. He came to himself.

On the other hand, sometimes this change is very gradual. I need not dwell upon that, but there are many who have their eyes opened by degrees. They first see men as trees walking. Afterwards, they see all things clearly. So long as they do but come to themselves, and come to the Savior, I mind not how they come! Some conversions are sudden, some gradual, but in every case, if it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the man comes to himself, it is well.

Now let us consider how this change happened. If you should ask me the outward circumstances of the prodigals case, I would say that it took a great deal to bring him to himself. Why, surely, one says, he ought to have come to himself when he had spent all! He must have come to himself when he began to be hungry. No, it took a great deal to bring him to himself, and to his fatherand it takes a great deal to bring sinners to themselves and to their God. There are some of you who will have to be beaten with many stripes before you will be saved. I heard one say, who was crushed almost to death in an accident, If I had not nearly perished, I would have wholly perished. So is it with many sinnersif some had not lost all they had, they would have lost allbut, by strong winds, rough and raging, some are driven into the port of peace.

The occasion of the prodigals climax was thishe was very hungry, in great sorrow and he was alone. It is a grand thing if we can get people to be alone. There was nobody near the poor man and no sound for him to hear except the grunting of the hogs and their munching of those husks. Ah, to be alone! I wish that we had more opportunities of being alone in this great city, yet, perhaps, the most awful loneliness may be realized while walking a London street! It is a good thing for a sinner, sometimes, to be alone. The prodigal had nobody to drink with him, nobody to sport with himhe was too far gone for that. He had not a rag to pawn to get another pinthe must, therefore, just sit still without one of his old companions. They only followed him for what they could get out of him. As long as he could treat them, they would treat him well, but when he had spent all, no man gave unto him. He was left without a comrade in misery he could not allay, in hunger he could not satisfy. He pulled that belt up another notch and made it tighterbut it almost seemed as if he would cut himself in two if he drew it any tighter! He was almost reduced to a skeleton. Emaciation had taken hold of him and he was ready to lie down there and die. Then it was that he came to himself.

Do you know why this change occurred in the prodigals case? I believe that the real reason was that his father was secretly working for him all the while. His state was known to his father. I am sure it was because the elder brother knew it and if the elder brother heard of it, so did the father. The elder brother may have told him, or, if not, the fathers greater love would have a readier ear for tidings of his son than the elder brother had. Though the parable cannot tell usfor no parable is meant to teach us everythingyet it is true that our Father is Omnipotent and He was secretly touching the core of this young mans heart, and dealing with him by this wondrous surgery of famine and of need to make him, at last, come to himself.

Perhaps somebody here says, I wish I could come to myself, Sir, without going though all that process. Well, you have come to yourself, already, if you really wish that! Let me suggest to you that in order to prove that it is so, you should begin seriously to thinkto think about who you are, where you are and what is to become of you. Take time to think, and think in an orderly, steady, serious manner and, if you can, jot down your thoughts. It is a wonderful help to some people to put down upon paper an account of their own condition. I believe that there were many who found the Savior one night when I urged them, when they went home, to write on a piece of paper, Saved as a Believer in Jesus, or else, Condemned because I believe not on the Son of God. Some who began to write that word, condemned, have never finished it, for they found Christ, then and there, while seeking Him! You keep your account books, do you not? I am sure you do if you are in trade, unless you are going to cheat your creditors. You keep your business bookswell, now, keep a record concerning your soul! Really look these matters in the face, the hereafter, deathwhich may come so suddenlythe great eternity, the Judgement Seat. Think about these things! Do not shut your eyes to them. Men and women, I pray you, do not play the fool! If you must play the fool, take some lighter things to trifle with than your souls and your eternal destinies! Shut yourselves up, alone, for a whilego through this matter steadily, lay it out in order, make a plan of it. See where you are going. Think over the way of salvation, the story of the Cross, the love of God, the readiness of Christ to saveand I think that, while this process is going on, you will feel your heart meltingand soon you will find your soul believing in the precious blood which sets the sinner free!

III. I had much more to say, but time has gone, so I must close with just a few words on this last point, WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF, THEN HE CAME TO HIS FATHER.

When a sinner comes to himself, he soon comes to his God. This poor prodigal, soon after he came to himself, said, I will arise and go to my father. What led him back to his father? Very briefly Let me answer that question.

First, his memory awakened him. He remembered his fathers house, he remembered the past, his own riotous living. Do not try to forget all that has happenedthe terrible recollections of a misspent past may be the means of leading you to a new life. Set memory to work.

Next, his misery bestirred him. Every pang of hunger that he felt, the sight of his rags, the degradation of associating with swineall these things drove him back to his father. O Sirs, let your very needs, your cravings, your misery, drive you to your God!

Then, his fears whipped him back. He said, I perish with hunger. He had not perished, yet, but he was afraid that he soon would do so. He feared that he really would die, for he felt so faint. O Sirs, see what will become of you if you die in your sins! What awaits you but an endless future of limitless misery? Sin will follow you into eternity and will increase upon you, there, and as you shall go on to sin, so shall you go on to sorrow always increasing. A deeper degradation and a more tremendous penalty will accompany your sin in the world to come! Therefore, let your fears drive you home, as they drove home the poor prodigal.

Meanwhile, his hope drew him. This gentle cord was as powerful as the heavy whipIn my fathers house there is bread enough and to spare; I need not perish with hunger, I may yet be filled. Oh, think of what you may yet be! Poor sinner, think of what God can do and is ready to do for you, to do for you even tonight! How happy He can make you! How peaceful and how blessed! So let your hope draw you to Him. Then, his resolve moved him. He said, I will arise and go to my father. All else drove him or drew him and now he is resolved to return home! He rose up from the earth on which he had been sitting amidst his filthiness and he said, I will. Then the man became a man! He had come to himself, the manhood had come back to him, and he said, I will, I will.

Lastly, there was the real act of going to his fatherit was that which brought him home. No, let me correct myself. It is said, He came to his father, but there is a higher Truth of God at the back of that, for his father came to him. So, when you are moved to return and the resolution becomes an action and you arise, and go to God, salvation is yours almost before you could have expected it, for, once turn your face that way, and while you are yet a great way off, your Father will outstrip the wind and come and meet you, and fall upon your neck, and kiss you with the kisses of reconciliation! This shall be your portion if you will but trust the Lord Jesus Christ!

As for you Christian people who may be saying that there is nothing for you in the sermon, do not turn into a company of grumbling elder brothers! On the contrary, go home and pray God to bless this sermon. But, you say, I have not had the fatted calf tonight. Oh, but if it were killed for the younger son, it was for you, also! I did not have the music and dancing tonight. Well, they have had it over the returned prodigal, over some soul that has already believed in Christ, tonightI know they have! God does not let us preach for nothing. He will pay us our wages and give us our reward! So rejoice with us over all that the Lord has done, and all that He is going to do! The Lord bless you, Beloved, all of you, without exception, for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 15.**

This is a chapter that needs no explanation. It carries its key within itself and the experience of every child of God is the best exposition of it. The three parables recorded here set forth the work of saving Grace in different aspects.

Verses 1, 2. Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receives sinners, and eats with them. The Pharisees and scribes formed the outside ring of Christs hearers, but the inner circle consisted of the guilty, the heavy-laden and the lowly. They pressed as near to Christ as they could, that they might catch His every word and, besides, there was an attractiveness about His manner that drew them towards Him. His mercy attracted their misery! They needed Him and He desired them they were thus well met. There will be an inner circle, tonight, when the Gospel is preached, and it will not consist of the self-righteous. They that are full will not press to the table on which the Gospel feast is spread the hungry will be found nearest to the heavenly provision.

3. And He spoke this parable unto them, saying. There are three parables here, but, inasmuch as it is called this parable, it is really only one. It is a picture in three panels representing the same scene from different points of view.

4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he finds it? It has a new importance in his eyes, for it is lost. Before, it was only one of a hundred in the fold, but now it is one distinct and separate from all the rest, and the shepherds thought is fixed upon it.

5, 6. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. No doubt he was glad that the other sheep were not lost, but that joy was, for a while, quite eclipsed in the more striking and vivid joy over the one which had been lost!

7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. If such there isand there are many who think that they belong to this classthey bring no joy to the great Shepherd. But you who have had to mourn over your lost estate set the bells of Heaven ringing with a new melody when you are recovered by the great Redeemer! The first of these three parables may be said to represent salvation in reference to the work of the Son of God as the great Seeker and Saver of the souls of men. In the second, we have a representation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church of God.

8. Or what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she loses one piece, does not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she finds it? Her thoughts were all concerning that one lost piece. It had not more intrinsic value than the rest, but, being lost, it called off her attention from the other nine. She valued it and for the hope of finding it she lighted a candle, swept the house and sought diligently till she found it. This is a picture of the Holy Spirits work in seeking for lost souls. They bear the Kings impressthey are coins of the realm. This woman knew that the silver coin was not far away, so she swept the house and sought diligently, using all her eyes, devoting all her time to this one object, quitting all other avocations until she found it.

9. And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. She might never have called them together to rejoice that she had ten pieces of silvershe might even have hidden themand the joy she had in them might have been only her own, a solitary joy. But now that the one piece had been lost and had been found, again, she says, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. Not joy among the angels, as some read it, though no doubt that is a truth, but, joy in the presence of the angels of God. And what can that mean but that God, Himself, rejoices, and rejoices so that angels perceive it! And no doubt they then join in the delight! But all this points out that it is the lost one that is the great object of consideration, that out of any congregation where the Gospel is preached, it is the lost one who is the most important person in the whole place! In the next verses, we get the

Fathers part in the work of the recovery of the wanderer.

11-13. And He said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. His heart was far away when he asked his father to give him his portion and now his body is far away as he goes into the outward wandering which follows after the inner wandering.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land. There generally does arise a mighty famine in such cases. Famines and other miseries are Gods messengers which He sends after His wandering children.

14. And he began to be in want. This was a new sensation to himhe had never known it when he was at home. He did not know it in his first boisterous days away from his fathers house, but now, he began to be in want.

16. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. Perhaps he did not want to employ him but said that he would give him that occupation if he cared to accept it. It was small pay, very dishonoring work to a Jew, not fit employment for the son of a nobleman, yet, half a loaf is better than no bread, so he took it, though even the half loaf must have been a very small one.

16. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. Such a thing as generosity was not known in that country. His companions could share his riches when he was living riotously, but they will not share their riches, now that he is in his poverty.

17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! My fathers day-laborers have bread enough and to spare, yet I, his child, perish with hunger.

18, 19. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants. You notice that this last part of the prayer he never did pray, for it was stopped by his fathers love! There was a legalism about it, naturally suggested by his own despair, but it was not such as his father would tolerate.

20, 21. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. There comes an interruption there; the kiss upon his lips stops the rest of the prayer, which he had prepared, and now the father declares his will concerning the wanderer.

22-24. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. I have never read that they left off being merry, for the conversion of a soul is enough to make eternal joy in the hearts of the righteous!

25, 26. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. This was a new thing and, apparently, a thing that he did not care much about. How had it come to pass that there was such noise, such joy?

27, 28. And he said unto him, Your brother is come; and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out and pleaded with him. I hardly know which to admire most, the love of the father when he fell upon the neck of the prodigal, or the love of the father when he went out to talk with his elder son! Therefore came his father out, and pleaded with him. Oh, our God is very good to us when we give way to naughty tempers! If we begin to think that we are very holy people, that we have been long the servants of God and that there ought to be some little fuss made over us as well as over great sinners that come into the Church, then our Father is very gentle, and He comes out and entreats us.

29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years have I served you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. I have had no banquets. I have kept at home, a patient worker, and have had no extraordinary joys. I know some Christian workers who are very much in this condition. They keep on and on and on in holy service, and they do well, but they seldom have great entertainments of high joy and unspeakable delight. It is their own fault and it is a thousand pities that they do not have them, for they might have them if they would! There is a tendency to grow so absorbed in service, like Martha, that we are cumbered by itand we do not have the joy of Mary in communion at the Masters feet. I am sure that this elder son was out of fellowship with his father, or else he would not have talked as he did. We are all apt to get into such a condition. See to it, you who work for Jesus, that it is not so with you! Then the elder brother went on to say

30. But as soon as this son of yours came, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf. I do not read that the prodigal had devoured his fathers living with harlotsthat is the elder brothers version of it. I dare say that it was true, but it is always a pity to give the roughest interpretation to things. He had spent his substance in riotous living. When we are cross, we generally use the ugliest words we canwe may think that we are speaking forcibly, but, indeed, we are speaking naughtilyand not as our Father would have us speak.

31. And he said unto him, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. Oh, what a word was that! How it reminds Christians of their privileges, if they would but appropriate them! It is yours, Beloved, to live always with your God and to know that all that He has is yours! You ought to live in a perpetual festivalfor you there should be one joyful Christmastide that lasts from the beginning of the year to the end of it! Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.

32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. It was the fit thing, and the proper thing, and the right thing, that there should be extraordinary joy over a returning sinner. There ought to be, there must be, there shall be special music and dancing over sinners saved by the Grace of God! The Lord give us some such, tonight, and make us glad over them! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #219 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

AN APPEAL TO SINNERS   
NO. 219

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, SEPTEMBER 14, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**This Man receives sinners.   
Luke 15:2.**

IT was a singular group which had gathered round our Savior, when these words were uttered, for we are told by the EvangelistThen drew near unto Him all the Publicans and sinners for to hear Him. The Publicansthe very lowest grade, the public oppressors, scorned and hated by the mean Jewthese, together with the worst of characters, the scum of the streets and the very riff-raff of the society of Jerusalem, came around this mighty preacher, Jesus Christ, in order to listen to His words. On the outside of the throng there stood a few respectable people who in those days were called Pharisees and Scribesmen who were highly esteemed in the synagogues as rulers and governors and teachers. These looked with scorn upon the Preacher. They watched Him with invidious eyes, to find some fault. If they could find none in Him personally, yet they could easily find it in His congregation. His deportment towards them shocked their false notion of propriety and when they observed that He was affable with the very worst of characters, that He spoke loving words to the most fallen of mankind, they said of Him what they intended for a disgrace, albeit it was highly to His honorThis Man receives sinners.

I believe that our Savior could not have wished to have had a sentence uttered concerning Him more evidently true or more thoroughly consistent with His sacred commission. It is the exact portrait of His Character. He is the man who receives sinners. Many a true word has been spoken in jest and many a true word has been spoken in slander. Men have said sometimes in jest, There goes a saint. But it has been true. They have said, There goes one of your chosen ones, one of your elect. They meant it as a slander but the doctrine they scandalized was to the person who received it a comfort. It was his glory and his honor. Now the Scribes and Pharisees wished to slander Christ. But in so doing they outstripped their intentions and bestowed upon Him a title of renown. This man receives sinners and eats with them.

This evening I shall divide my observations to you into three parts. First, the doctrine that Christ receives sinners, which is a doctrine of Holy Writ. Secondly, the encouragement it affords the sinner. And thirdly, the exhortation naturally springing from it, to the same character.

I. First, then THE DOCTRINE. The doctrine is not that Christ receives everybody, but that He receives sinners. By that term we, in common parlance, understand everybody. It is in the present day quite fashionable

for everybody to lie against what he believes and to say he is a sinner even when he believes himself to be a very respectable, well-to-do man and does not conceive that he ever did anything very amiss in his life. It is a sort of orthodox confession for men to make when they say that they are sinners. Though they might just as well use one formula as another, or repeat words in a foreign tonguefor they mean no deep and heartfelt contrition. They have no true apprehension that they are sinners at all.

These Scribes and Pharisees did virtually assert that they were not sinners. They marked out the Publicans and the harlots and the worthless and they said, These are sinners, we are not. Very well, said Christ, I endorse the distinction you have made. In your own opinion, you are not sinners. Well, you shall stand exempt for the time from being called sinnersI endorse your distinction. But I beg to inform you that I came to save those very persons who, in their own estimation and in yours, are reckoned to be sinners.

It is my belief that the doctrine of the text is thisthat Christ receives not the self-righteous, not the good, not the whole-hearted, not those who dream that they do not need a Savior. But He receives the broken in spirit, the contrite in heartthose who are ready to confess that they have broken Gods Laws and have merited His displeasure. These and these alone Christ came to save. And I reassert the subject of last Sabbath eveningthat Jesus has died for such and for none other. That He has shed His blood for those who are ready to confess their sins and who seek mercy through the open veins of His wounded bodybut for none other did He designedly offer up Himself upon the Cross.

Now, let us remark, Beloved, that there is a very wise distinction on the part of God that He has been pleased thus to choose and call sinners to repentance and not others. For this reason none but these ever come to Him. There has never been such a miracle as a self-righteous man coming to Christ for mercynone but those who want a Savior have ever come. It stands to reason that when men do not consider themselves in need of a Savior they never will approach His Throne. And surely it is satisfactory enough for all purposes that Christ should say He receives sinners, seeing that sinners are the only persons who will ever come to Him for mercy and therefore it would be useless for Him to say that He would receive any but those who most assuredly will come.

And mark, again, none but those can come! No man can come to Christ until he truly knows himself to be a sinner. The self-righteous man cannot come to Christfor what is implied in coming to Christ? Repentance, trust in His mercy and the denial of all confidence in ones self. Now, a selfrighteous man cannot repent and yet be self-righteous. He conceives that he has no sinwhy, then, should he repent? Tell him to come to Christ with humble penitence and he exclaimsYou insult my dignity! Why should I approach to God? Wherein have I sinned? My knee shall not bend to seek pardon, wherein I have not offended. This lip shall not seek forgiveness when I do not believe myself to have transgressed against God. I shall not ask for mercy.

The self-righteous man cannot come to God. For his coming to God implies that he ceases to be self-righteous. Nor can a self-righteous man put his trust in Christwhy should he? Shall I trust in a Christ whom I do not require? If I am self-righteous, I need no Christ to save me in my own opinion. How, then, can I come with such a confession as this?

*Nothing in my hands I bring,*   
when I have got my hands full. How can I say, Wash me, when I believe myself clean? How can I say Heal me, when I think that I never was sick? How can I cry, Give me freedom, give me liberty, when I believe I never was a slave and never in bondage to any man? It is only the man who knows his slavery by reason of the bondage of sin and the man who knows himself to be sick even unto death by reason of the sense of guilt it is only the man who feels he cannot save himselfwho can with faith rely upon the Savior. Nor can the self-righteous man renounce himself and lay hold of Christbecause in the renunciation of himself he would at once become the very character whom Christ says He will receive.

He would then put himself in the place of the sinner, when he casts away his own righteousness. Why, Sirs, coming to Christ implies the taking off the polluted robe of our own righteousness and putting on Christs. How can I do that if I wittingly wrap my own garment about me? And if in order to come to Christ I must forsake my own refuge and all my own hope, how can I do it if I believe my hope to be good and my refuge to be secure and if I suppose that already I am clothed sufficiently to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb? No, Beloved, it is the sinner and the sinner only, who can come to Christ. The self-righteous man cannot do it. It is quite out of his wayhe would not do it if he could. His very selfrighteousness fetters his foot so that he cannot comepalsies his arm so that he cannot take hold of Christand blinds his eye, so that he cannot even see the Savior.

Yet another reasonif these people, who are not sinners, would come to Christ, Christ would get no glory from them. When the physician opens his door for those who are sick and I go there full of health, he can win no honor from me, because he cannot exert his skill upon me. The benevolent man may distribute all his wealth to the poor, but let someone go to him who has abundance and he shall win no esteem from him for feeding the hungry, or for clothing the naked, since the applicant is neither hungry nor naked. If Jesus Christ proclaims that He gives His grace unto all who come for it, surely it is sufficient, seeing that none will or can come for it but those whose pressing necessities prompt them.

A great sinner brings great glory to Christ when he is saved. A man who is no sinner, if he could attain to Heaven would glorify himselfhe would not glorify Christ. The man who has no stains may plunge into the fountain. But he cannot magnify its cleansing power for he has no stains to

wash away. He that has no guilt can never magnify the word forgiveness. It is the sinner, then, and the sinner only, who can glorify Christ. And hence This Man receives sinners. But it is not said that He receives any else. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. This is the doctrine of the text.

But allow us just to amplify that wordThis Man receives sinners. Now by that we understand that He receives sinners to all the benefits which He has purchased for them. If there is a fountain, He receives sinners to wash them in it. If there is medicine for the soul, He receives sinners to heal their diseases. If there is a house for the sick, an hospital, a lazar-house for the dying, He receives such into that retreat of mercy. All that He has of love, all that He has of mercy, all that He has of atonement, all that He has of sanctification, all that He has of righteousnessto all these He receives the sinner. And morenot content with taking him to His house, He receives him to His heart. He takes the black and filthy sinner and having washed himThere, He says, you are My Beloved. My desire is towards you. And to consummate the whole, at last He receives the saints to Heaven. Saints, I said, but I meant those who were sinners, for none can be saints truly but those who once were sinners and have been washed in the blood of Christ and made white through the sacrifice of the Lamb.

Observe it then, Beloved, that in receiving sinners we mean the whole of salvation. And this word in my text, Christ receives sinners, grasps in the whole of the Covenant. He receives them to the joys of Paradise, to the bliss of the beatified, to the songs of the glorified, to an eternity of happiness forever. This Man receives sinners. And I dwell with special emphasis on this pointHe receives none else. He will have none else to be saved but those who know themselves to be sinners. Full, free salvation is preached to every sinner in the universe, but I have no salvation to preach to those who will not acknowledge themselves to be sinners. To them I must preach the Law, telling them that their righteousness is but as filthy rags, that their goodness shall pass away as the spiders web and shall be broken in pieces, even as the egg of the ostrich is broken by the foot of the horse. This Man receives sinners, and receives none else.

II. Now, then, THE ENCOURAGEMENT. If Jesus Christ receives sinners, poor sick Sinner, what a sweet word this is for you! Surely, then, He will not reject you. Come, let me encourage you this night to come to my Master, to receive His great atonement and to be clothed with all His righteousness. Markthose whom I address, are the bona fide, real, actual sinners. Not the complimentary sinners. Not those who say they are sinners by way of pacifying, as they suppose, the religionists of the day. I speak to those who feel their lost, ruined, hopeless condition. All these are now frankly and freely invited to come to Jesus Christ and to be saved by Him. Come, poor Sinner, come.

Come, because He has said He will receive you. I know your fears, we all felt them once when we were coming to Christ. I know you say in your heart, He will reject me. If I present my prayer, He will not hear me, if I cry unto Him, yet perhaps the heavens will be as brass, I have been so great a sinner that He will never take me into His house to dwell with Him. Poor Sinner! Dont say that. He has published the decree. It is enough between man and man usually, if we count our fellow creatures honest, to obtain a promise. Sinner! Is this not enough between yourself and the Son of God? He has said, Him that comes I will in nowise cast out. Dare you not venture on that promise? Will you not go to sea in a ship as staunch as thisHe has said it! It has been often and again the only comfort of the saintson this they have lived, on this they have diedJesus Christ has said it! What? Do you think Christ will lie? Would He tell you He will receive you and yet not do so? Would He say, My fatlings are killed, come to the supper, and yet shut the door in your face? No, if He has said He will cast out none that come to Him, rest assured He cannot, He will not cast you out. Come, then, try His love on this ground, that He has said it.

Come and fear not, because, remember, if you feel yourself to be a sinner, that feeling is Gods

gift and therefore you may very safely come to one who has already done so much to draw you. A stranger calls at my house. He asks for alms and he tells me at first very plainly that he never saw me before, that he has no claim upon my generosity, but he throws himself entirely upon any benevolent feeling that I may chance to have in my breast. But if I had done anything for him before, he might say, supposing I were a rich man, Sir, you have done so much for me, I think you will not give me up at last. I believe you will not let me starve, after so much love. Poor Sinner! If you feel your need of a Savior, Christ made you feel it. If you have a wish to come after Christ, Christ gave you that wish. If you have any desire after God, God gave you that desire. If you can sigh after Christ, Christ made you sigh. If you can weep after Christ, Christ made you weep!

No, if you can only wish for Him with the strong wish of one that fears he never can find, yet hopes he mayif you can but hope for HimHe has given you that hope. And oh, will not you come to Him? You have some of the kings bounties about you nowcome and plead what He has done, there is no suit that can ever fail with God when you plead this. Tell Him His past mercies urge you to try Him in the future. Down on your knees, Sinner, down on your knees! Tell Him this Lord, I thank You that I know myself to be a sinner. You have taught me that. I bless You that I do not wrap up my sin, that I know it, that I feel itthat it is ever before me. Lord, would You make me see my sin and not let me see my Savior? What? Will You open the wound and put in the lancet and yet not heal me? What? Lord! Have you said, I kill, and have You not said in the same breath, I make alive? Have you killed me and will you not make me alive? Plead that, poor Sinner and you will find it true, that this Man receives sinners.

Does this not suffice you? Then here is another reason. I am sure this Man receives sinners because He has received many, many, before you. See, there is Mercys doormark how many have been to it. You can almost hear the knocks upon the door now, like echoes of the past. You may remember how many way-worn travelers have called there for rest, how many famished souls have applied there for bread. Go, knock at Mercys door and ask the porter this question, Was there ever one applied to the door that was refused? I can assure you of the answerNo, not one.

*No sinner was ever empty sent back,*

*Who came seeking mercy for Jesus sake.* And shall you be the first? Do you think God will forfeit His good name by turning you away? Mercys gate has been open night and day, ever since man sinned. Do you think it will be shut for the first time in your face?

No, Brothers and Sisters, go and try it. And if you find it is, come back and say, You have not read the Bible as you ought to have done, or else say you have found one promise there which has not been fulfilledfor He said, Him that comes I will in nowise cast out. I do not believe there ever was in this world one who was suffered by God to say that He sought mercy of Him sincerely and did not find it. No, moreI believe that such a being never shall exist, but whosoever comes unto Christ shall most assuredly find mercy. What greater encouragement do you want? Do you want a salvation for those that will not come to be saved? Do you want blood sprinkled on those that will not come to Christ? You must want it, then. I will not preach it to you. I find it not in Gods Word and therefore I dare not.

And now, Sinner, I have yet another plea to urge with you why you should believe that Christ will receive all sinners who come to Him. It is this, that He calls all such. Now if Christ calls us and bids us come, we may be sure He will not turn us away when we do come. Once a blind man sat by the wayside begging. He heardfor he could not seehe heard the trampling of the many feet that were passing by him. He asked what all this meantthey said that Jesus of Nazareth passed by. Loudly did he cry, Jesus, You son of David, have mercy on me! The ear of mercy was apparently deaf and the Savior walked on and heeded not the prayer. The poor man sat still then, but cried aloud, though he did not move. Yet when the Savior said, Come here, ah, then he did not delay an instant. They said, Arise, He calls you. And pushing them all aside, he made his way through the crowd and offered the prayer, Lord, let me receive my sight.

Well, then, you who feel yourself to be lost and ruined, arise and speak. He calls for you. Convicted Sinner, Christ says, Come. And that you may be sure He says it, let us quote that Scripture again, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. You are called, Manthen come. If her Majesty were riding by, you might scarcely presume to speak to her. But if your name were called, and by her own lips, would you not go to her carriage and would not you listen to what she had to say to you? Now, the King of Heaven says, Come. Yes, the same lips that will one day say, Come, you blessed, says this night, Come, you poor distressed sinners, come to Me and I will save you. There is not a distressed soul in this hall, if his distress is the work of Gods Holy Spirit, that shall not find salvation in the wounds of Christ. Believe then, Sinner, believe in Jesus, that He is able to save even you unto the very uttermost.

And now just one point more to commend this encouragement to you. Indeed, poor Souls, I know when you are under a sense of sin it is very hard to believe. We sometimes say, Only believe. But believing is just the hardest thing in the world when sin lies heavy on your shoulders. We say, Sinner, only trust in Christ. Ah, you do not know what a great only that is. It is a work so great that no man can do it unaided by God. For faith is the gift of God and He gives it only to His children. But if anything can call faith into exercise, it is this last thing I shall mention.

Sinner, remember that Christ is willing to receive you, for He came all the way from Heaven to seek you and find you out in your wanderings and to save you and rescue you from your miseries. He has given proof of His hearty interest in your welfare in that He has shed His very hearts blood to redeem your soul from death and Hell. If He had wanted the companionship of saints He might have stopped in Heaven, for there were many there. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were with Him there in Glory. But He wanted sinners. He had a thirst after perishing sinners. He wanted to make them trophies of His grace. He wanted sin-black souls, to wash them white. He wanted dead souls, to make them alive. His benevolence wanted objects on which to exert itself. And therefore

*Down from the shining seats above,   
With joyful haste He fled,   
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,   
And dwelt among the dead.*

Oh, Sinner, look there and see that Cross. Mark yonder Man upon it *See from His head, His hands, His feet,   
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!   
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,   
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

Do you note that eye? Can you see languid pity for your soul floating in it? Do you mark that side? It is opened that you may hide your sins in it. See those drops of crimson blood, every drop is trickling down for you. Hear you that death-shriek, Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani? That shriek in all its deep-toned solemnity is for you. Yes, for you, if you are a sinner. If you do this night say unto God, Lord, I know I have offended You. Have mercy upon me for Jesus sake. If now, taught by the Spirit, you are led to abhor yourself in dust and ashes because you have sinned, verily, before GodI tell you in His sight, as His servantyou shall be saved. For

Jesus would not die for you and yet let you perish.

III. Now the last point is IN EXHORTATION. If it is true that Christ came only to save sinners, my beloved Hearers, labor, strive, agonize, to get a sense in your souls of your own sinnership. One of the most distressing things in the world is to feel yourself a sinner. But that is no reason why I should not exhort you to seek it. For while distressing, it is only the distress of the bitter medicine which will effectually work the cure. Do not seek to get high ideas of yourself. Seek to get a low opinion of yourselfdo not try to deck yourself with ornamentslet it not be your endeavor to array yourself in gold and silver. Do not seek to be made good in yourself, but seek to strip yourself. Seek to humble yourself. Do not soar high, but sink low. Do not go up, but go down. Ask God to let you see that you are nothing at all. Ask Him to bring you to this, that you may have nothing to say but

*I the chief of sinners am*   
and if God hears your prayer, very likely Satan will tell you that you cannot be saved because you are a sinner.

But as Martin Luther said, Once when I was racked with pain and sin, Satan said, Luther, you can not be saved, for you are a sinner. No, said Martin Luther, I will cut your head off with your own sword. You say I am a sinner, I thank you for it. You are a holy Satan, (he says it in mockery no doubt) when you say I am a sinner. Well, then, Satan, Christ died for sinners, therefore He died for me. Ah said Luther, if you can but prove that to me, Satan, I will thank you for it. And so far from groaning, I will begin to sing, for all we want is to know and feel that we are sinners. Let us feel that. Let us know that and we may receive this as an undoubted fact of Revelation, that we have a right to come unto Christ and to believe on Him and receive Him as all our salvation and all our desire.

No doubt Conscience will come and stop you. But do not try to stop the mouth of Conscience. But tell Conscience you are much obliged to him for all that he says. Oh, you have been a desperate fellow he says, You sinned when you were young. You have sinned even until now. How many sermons have been wasted on you? How many Sabbaths have you broken? How many warnings have you despised? Oh, you are a desperate sinner. Tell Conscience that you thank him, for the more you can prove yourself to be a sinnernot by outward acts, but in your inmost heart the more you know yourself to be really guilty, the more reason you have to come to Christ and say, Lord, I believe You have died for the guilty. I believe you intended to save the worthless. I cast myself on You. Lord, save me!

That does not suit some of you, does it? It is not the kind of doctrine that flatters man much. Noyou would like to be good people and help Christ a little. You like that theory which some ministers are always proclaiming, God has done a great deal for you. You do the rest and then you will be saved. That is a very popular kind of doctrine. You do one part and God will do the other part, but that is not Gods Truth, it is only a delirious dream. God says, I will do the whole. Come and prostrate yourself at My feet. Give up your doings. Let me undertake for you. Afterwards, I will make you live to My glory. Only in order that you may be holy, I desire you to confess that you are unholy. In order that you may be sanctified, you must confess that you are as yet unsanctified.

Oh, do that, my Hearers. Fall down before the Lord, cast yourselves down. Do not stand up with pride. But fall down before God in humility tell Him you are undone without His Sovereign Gracetell Him you have nothing, you are nothing, you never will be anything more than nothing. Tell Him that you know Christ does not want anything of you, for He will take you just as you are. Do not seek to come to Christ with anything besides your sin. Do not seek to come to Christ with your prayers for a recommendation. Do not come to Him even with professions of your faith. Come to Him with your sin and He will give you faith. If you think that you will have faith apart from Him, you have made an error. It is Christ that saves us. We must come to Christ for all we want

*You O Christ, are all I want;   
All in All in You I find:   
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,   
Heal the sick and lead the blind.*

Jesus will do so and more also, but you must come as blind, you must come as sick, you must come as lostor else you cannot and must not come at all.

Come then, to Jesus, I beseech you, whatever may up to this time have kept you away. Your doubts would keep you away, but say, Stand back, UnbeliefChrist says He died for sinnersand I know I am a sinner

*My faith will on that promise live,*

*Will on that promise die.*   
And there is one thing I want to say, before I have done. Do not stay away from Christ when you know yourself to be a sinner, because you think you do not understand every point of theology. Very often I get young converts with me and they say, I do not understand this or that doctrine. Well, I am very glad, so far as I am able to explain it to them. But sometimes I get not young converts, but young convicts, those who are under conviction of sin. And when I am trying to bring them to this, that if they are but sinners they may believe in Christ, they begin with this knotty point and that knotty pointand they seem to imagine that they cannot be saved till they are thorough theologians.

Now, if you expect to understand all theology before you put your faith in Christ I can only tell you, you never will. For live as long as ever you may, there will be some depths you cannot explore. There are certain unquestionable facts which you must hold. There will always be some difficulties through which you will not be able to see. The most favored saint on earth does not understand everything. But you want to understand all things before you come to Christ. One man asks me how sin came into

the world and he will not come unto Christ till he knows that. Why, he will be lost beyond hope of recovery, if he waits till he knows it. For nobody will ever know it. I have no reason to believe that it is even revealed to those who are in Heaven.

Another wants to know how it is that men are bid to comeand yet we are taught in Scripture that no man can comeand he must have that cleared upjust as if the poor man who had a withered arm, when Christ said, Stretch out your arm, had replied, Lord, I have got a difficulty in my mind. I want to know how You can tell me to stretch out my arm when it is withered. Suppose when Christ had said to Lazarus, Come forth, Lazarus had said, I have a difficulty in my mindhow can a dead man come forth? Why, know this, vain man! When Christ says, Stretch out your arm, He gives you power to stretch out your arm with the command and the difficulty is solved in practicethough I believe it never will be solved in theory. If men want to have theology mapped out to them, as they would have a map of Englandif they want to have every little village and every hedgerow in the Gospel kingdom mapped out to themthey will not find it anywhere but in the Bible. And they will find it so mapped out there that the years of a Methuselah would not suffice to find out every little thing in it.

We must come to Christ and learn, not learn and then come to Christ. Ah, but, says another, that is not the ground of my misgivings. I do not perplex myself much about theological points. I have got a worse anxiety than thatI feel I am too bad to be saved. Well, I believe you are wrong then, that is all I can say in reply to you. For I will believe Christ before I will believe you. You say you are too bad to be saved? Christ says, Him that comes I will in no wise cast out. Now, which shall be right? Christ says He will receive the very worst. You say He will not. What then? Let God be true and every man a liar.

But there is one matter of counsel I wish you would accept, I desire of God that He may bring you to come and try the Lord Jesus Christ and see whether He will turn you away. What concern is it to me that I am so often reproached for making my appeals to the worst of sinners? It is said that I direct my ministry to drunkards, harlots, blasphemers and sinners of the grosser sort. And what if the finger of scorn is pointed at me, or if I shall be accounted as a fool before the public? Do you think I shall be deterred by their irony? Do you think I shall stand abashed at their ungenerous ridicule? Oh, nolike David, when he danced before the ark of the Lord and Michal, Sauls daughter, jeered at him and taunted him as a shameless fellow, I shall only reply, if this is vile, I purpose to be more vile yet.

While I see the footprints of my Master before me and while I see still more His gracious sanctions following my labors. While I behold His name magnified, His glory increased and perishing souls saved, (as thanks be to God we have witness everyday)while this Gospel warrants me, while the Spirit of God moves me and while signs following do multiply the seals of my commissionwho am I that I should stay myself for man, or resist the Holy Spirit for any flesh that breathes? Oh then, you chief of sinners, you vilest of the vile, you who are the scum of the city, the refuse of the earth, the dregs of creation, whom no man seeks afteryou whose characters are destroyed and whose inmost souls are polluted so black that no fuller on earth can whiten you, so debased that you have sunk beyond the hope of any moralist to reclaim youCome! Come to Christ! Come at His own invitation. Come and you shall be surely received with a hearty welcome!

My Master said that He received sinners. His enemies said it of Him, This Man receives sinners. In deed and in truth we know of a surety that He does receive sinners, the enemies themselves being witnesses. Come now and yield the fullest credit to His work, His invitation, His promise. Do you object that it was only during a few days grace in the time of His sojourn on earth that He received sinners? No, not so. It is confirmed by all subsequent experience. The Apostles of Jesus echoed it after He had ascended into Heaven, in terms as unqualified as He Himself expressed it when on earth. Will you not believe thisThis is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief? You Despisers, go away and laugh at this. Go away and scorn the preached Gospel if you will. But one day we shall meet each other, face to face, before our Maker and it may, perhaps, go hard, then, with all those who have despised Christ and laughed at His gracious words.

Is there is an infidel here who says he shall be well enough off if he shall die the death of annihilation and shall not live in a future world? Well, my Friend, suppose all men die like dogs, I shall be as well off as you are and I think a little better off, even as to happiness and peace in this world. But if(and mark you I do not put it so because I doubt it)if it is true that there is a world to come, I would not like to stand in your place in the next world! If it is so that there is a judgment seat and a Hell(I put it hypothetically, not because I have a doubt about it, but because you tell me you doubt it though I do not think you really do)if there is such a place, what will you do then?

Why, even now you shake if a leaf falls in the night. You are terrified if the cholera is in the street. You are alarmed if you are a little sick and you rush to the physician and anyone can impose upon you with his medicines, because you are afraid of death. What will you do in the swellings of Jordan, when death gets hold on you? If a little pain frightens you now, what will you do when your body shall shake and your knees shall knock together before your Maker? What will you do, my Hearer when His burning eyes shall eat into your very soul? What will you do, when amid ten thousand thunders, He shall say, Depart, depart?

I cannot tell you what you will do. But I will tell you one thing that you dare not do. That is, you dare not say that I have not as simply as ever I could tried to preach the Gospel to the very chief of sinners. Hear it again He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. To believe is to trust in Christto drop into those blessed arms that can catch the heaviest laden sinner that ever breathed. To believe is to fall flat on the promiseto let Him do all for you until He has quickened you and enabled you to work out what He has before worked in you, your own salvation. And even this must be with fear and trembling.

God almighty grant that some poor soul may be blessed tonight! You that are safe on shore I do not expect to do you any good. If I have a rope to send abroad into the sea, it is only the stranded vessel, the shipwrecked mariner that will rejoice at the rope. You that think yourselves safe, I have no necessity to preach to you. You are all so perilously good in your own sight, it is no use trying to make you better. You are all so awfully righteous, you can go on your way well enough, without warning from me. You must excuse me, therefore, if I have nothing to say to you except this, Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

But allow me to turn myself to another class of people, the vilest of the vile. I should not care if I gained the nickname of the preacher to the basest and the vilest. I should not blush to be reviled like Rowland Hill, as the preacher to the lowest orders. For they want the Gospel as much as any creatures under Heaven and if nobody will preach it to them, God helping me, I will endeavor to preach it to them in words that they can understand. And if genteel people do not like preaching in that style, they have the option of leaving. If they want to hear men preach in intellectual strains, above the capacity of common sinners, let them go and hear them. I must content myself with following my Lord, who made Himself of no reputationto go after out-of-the-way sinners in an out-of-the-way fashion. I would sooner do violence to pulpit decorum and break through pulpit decency than not break through hard hearts.

I count that sort of preaching to be the right sort, that does reach the heart somehow or other and I am not particular how I do it. I confess, if I could not preach in one way I would in another. If nobody would come to hear me in a black coat, they should be attracted by my wearing a red one. Somehow or other, I would make them hear the Gospel if I could. And I would labor so to preach, that the mean understanding should be able to get hold of this one factThis Man receives sinners. God bless you all, for Christs sake!

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OPEN HOUSE FOR ALL COMERS

NO. 665

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 17, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**This Man receives sinners and eats with them.   
Luke 15:2.**

IT is not very unusual that the Pharisees could not understand the Saviors mode of actionnot only because self-righteousness and bigotry had blinded their eyes and callousness of heart to the interest of others and had bound them up in the darkness of self-righteousnessbut also because the Saviors mode of acting was contrary to the general current of the dispensation to which the Pharisee had been accustomed. The dispensation of the old Covenant was that of distance. When God appeared to His servant Moses, it was, Draw not near here: put off your shoes from off your feet. And when He manifested Himself upon Mount Sinai to His own chosen and separated people, one of the first commands was, You shall set bounds about the mount and if so much as a beast touches the mountain it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart.

In the sacred worship of the tabernacle and the temple the thought of distance must always have been prominent to the devout mind. The mass of the people did not even enter the outer court. Into the inner court none but the priests could ever dare to come. And into the innermost place, or the holy of holies, once a year one person only ever entered! A thick costly veil hung before the manifestation of Jehovahs Presence and upon the Shekinah no mortal eye ever gazed, except that eye which, once a year, alone, dared to look upon its splendor through the mist of the smoking incense when the blood of atonement was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat.

The Lord seemed ever to be saying to the whole of His people, with but a few exceptions, Come not near here. It was the dispensation of distanceas if the Lord in those early ages would teach man that sin was so utterly loathsome to Him that He must treat men as lepers put outside the camp. And when He came nearest to them, yet He made them feel the width of the separation between a holy God and the impure sinner.

But Jesus Christ came on quite another footing. The word, Go, was now exchanged for, Come, and distance was made to give place to nearness! Partitions were broken down, middle walls of separation became like tottering fences, and we, who sometime were afar off, were made near by the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Incarnate Deity has no wall of fire about it. Christ was surrounded with that Divinity which does hedge about a king, but it was only as a hedge of thorns to Himself and not as a hedge of briars to keep off the approach of the mean of mankind.

Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you restthat is the joyful proclamation of God as He appears in human flesh! Not now does He teach the leper his leprosy by setting him at a distance, but by suffering the penalty of mans defilement. Not now does He teach man that the disease is naturally incurableHe now shows him the heavenly cure by revealing the fact that God, without sullying His purity, can come into contact with impurity in order to its removal and without receiving contagion from the arch-leper. The devil can grapple with Him in the human heartHe can lay hold upon His adversary that He may bind him hand and foot and cast him away from menno more to oppress our race!

Jesus ushered in the dispensation of nearness, which, as you all know is to be followed by one of greater nearness still, for, as God is very near to us spiritually, the day draws nearoh, hasten it, good Lord!when the angels shall sing, The tabernacle of God is with men and He does dwell among them! We shall need no temple in which Deity can be enshrined, for the Lord God and the Lamb shall be the Temple of universal manhood and we shall see Him face to face and days of distance and of mourning shall be ended.

I do not wonder then that Pharisees, who had drunk very deep into the separating spirit of the Law, should have been perfectly astounded that a Person claiming to be the Messiah and professing to be that Adonai who sits at the right hand of Jehovah till His enemies are made His footstool should, as they thoughtact so inconsistently with His own professions and allow constantly a mob of the dross and scum and raff of the population to be associated with Him! They therefore said, This Man receives sinners, and worse still, He breaks through all rules of caste and all degrees of separateness and makes Himself so familiar that He actually eats with them!

Now, this fact, which so startled them, has become very familiar to those of us who have been received and have eaten with Him. But still, the sinner, trembling under a sense of sin, feels the spirit of the old Law like a black cloud hovering over him and he can hardly venture to believe, much less to understand in all its richness of mercy, that Jesus still receives sinners! He fosters the notion that Jesus will look for some good thing in him and demand at least some redeeming trait in character, some act of penitence, some holy resolution, something or other which may mitigate guilt and conciliate regard. But the abstract truth that this Man receives sinners as such and eats with them needs to be proclaimed again and again and againthat the ears of unbelieving, mistrustful men may at last receive itand that their hearts may feel its power!

May God the Holy Spirit bless our attempt this morning and His shall be the praise. Now, first of all, Jesus receiving sinners. And secondly, Jesus eating with them.

I. First, then, JESUS RECEIVING SINNERS. This was and is a great factour Lord received and still receives sinners! He permits them to form a part of His congregation and even to draw near to hear Him. A philosopher wrote over the door of his academy, He that is not learned, let him not enter here. But Jesus speaks by Wisdom in the Proverbs and says, Whoever is simple, let him turn in here: as for him that lacks understanding, let him eat of My bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled (Prov. 9:4, 5).   
He bids the simple come and learn at His feet. Moral teachers have always been choice in the selection of their followers and have thought it a degradation and a casting of pearls before swine to throw their useful maxims, their invaluable dogmas as they dream them to be, before the vulgar herd, the sinful crowd. But this Man receives sinners! Whatever other men may do, this Man, this One, this One alone, if no other with Himthis One beyond all other teachers, however gentle and compassionatethis Man receives sinners! He will speak and tell of His mysteries, too, even when sinful ears are listening, for He receives sinners as His disciples, as well as His hearers.

If they come casually into the throng, His eyes glance upon them and He has a word of gentle rebuke and wooing love. But if they will come and join the class who cluster constantly about Him, they shall be thoroughly welcome and the deeper and higher Truths reserved for disciples shall be revealed to them, and they shall know the mystery of the kingdom! When He has cleansed sinners, He receives them not only as disciples, but as companions. This Man permits the guilty, the once profane, the lately debauched and formerly dissolute, to associate themselves with Himto wear His name, to sit in His houseto be written in the same Book of Life with Himself!

He makes them here partakers with Him in His affliction, and hereafter they shall be partakers with Him in His Glory. This Man receives pardoned sinners into companionship. No, more, He receives them into friendship. The head that leaned upon His bosom was a sinners head, and those who sat at the table with Him, to whom He said, Henceforth I call you not servants, but Friends, were all of them, sinners, as they felt themselves to be. She who bore Him. She who ministered to Him of her substance. She who washed His feet with tears. She who was first at His empty sepulcherall these were sinners and some of them emphatically sinners!

Into His hearts love He receives sinners, takes them from the dunghill and wears them as jewels in His crown. He plucks them as brands from the burning and preserves them as precious monuments of His mercy. And none are so precious in His sight as the sinners for whom He died. When Jesus receives sinners, He has not some outside reception place where He charitably entertains them for a time, as great men may do passing beggars. No! He opens the big golden gates of His own heart and He takes the sinner right into Himselfyes, He admits the sinner into personal union with Himself and makes the sinner a member of His bodyof His flesh and of His bones. There was never such a reception as this! This fact is still the sameHe is

still receiving sinners!

This fact must not excite your unbelief because of its strangeness. I know the world, sinful as it is, does not receive sinners. When her character is gone, the fallen woman is pointed at in the streets and no decent society will entertain her. But this Man receives harlots when their good name and fame has long since become a thing of the past. When the man has played the rogue and the prison has confined him, there are few among his fellows who will speak with or own him. But this Man receives thieves! A dying thief went with Him into Paradise! Some men who run well for a season, who suddenly fall from their high estate, are banished and excluded, proscribed and shut out. And I suppose, while society is what it is, this must always be the case.

In Christs Church discipline requires that the offender should be put forth from us. It is painful, but it must be done. But there is no must of this sort pressing with dire necessity upon the tender heart of the Savior! He can receive without pollutionyes, even receive into His heart without injury to His purity. This Man receives sinners. Contrary to the maxims and customs and ways of the world, Jesus keeps open house for outcasts! When all other doors are shut, this Mans door is open. When everyone else has bid you go your way as an unclean thing, not fit to be looked upon, this Man still stands crying, Come unto Me! Come unto Me and I will give you rest!

Blessed fact! May you prove its truthfulness, dear Friends, by going to Jesus yourself, even though you are in the worst sense a sinner. This man receives sinnersnot, however, that they may remain sinners, but to pardon their sins, to justify their persons, to cleanse their hearts by the Holy Spiritto preserve their souls by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to lead them on from strength to strength, to enable them to serve Him and to show forth His praise, to have communion with Him and to enjoy His love. This Man receives sinners, at last, to reign with Him in Glory everlasting when the world and sin shall have passed away. Thus much we have noticed with regard to the fact. O blessed Spirit, give poor troubled consciences power to rest in this sweet Truth!

I want your attention to another thought, namely, the consistency of this fact. It is a most consistent and proper thing that this Man should receive sinners. If the Pharisees had not been rendered useless by their prejudice and would have considered the matter a little while, they might have thought so, too. Consider His Personwho was this Man? He claimed to be, and even they, themselves, must have acknowledged Him to have been by descent, the Son of David. It was most natural that the Son of David should receive sinners! It is what David didyou expect to see the Son of David doing what His father did before Him.

Do you not remember when David fled to the hold, in the cave of Adullam, that it is written, Everyone that was in distress and everyone that was in debt and everyone that was discontented gathered themselves unto him and he became a captain unto them? The very first band of men that ever served under David were most disreputable characters in the eye of Saul and his government. They had escaped from their country partly impoverished through the tyrannical conduct of Saul, and probably being knee-deep in treason against him, they escaped to put themselves under the leadership of that captain of bandits called David. It seemed but natural that the Son of David should receive just such a company when He began to establish His spiritual monarchy.

The New Jerusalem is founded upon Christ Jesus who is pure and perfect, but its first stones are hewn out of the quarries of sin. Our Lord Jesus, like Solomon, builds the temple of the Church, but the materials come from among those Tyrian sinners who are strangers and aliens by birth. The Savior takes, as His father, David, did before Him, discontented bankrupts and distressed traitors that they may make up His band. If they had thought of that circumstance, they might have seen that it was not quite so strange that the Son of David received sinners! If you and I reflect awhile, we shall remember that the types which were set forth concerning Christ all seem to teach us that He must receive sinners.

One of the earliest types of the Savior was Noahs ark, by which a certain company, not only of men, but also of the lowest animals, were preserved from perishing by water and were floated out of the old world into the new. See, going up the hill on which the ark is built, not only the fleet gazelle, the timid sheep, the patient ox, the noble horse, the generous dog and the fair creatures that you would wish to sparebut here comes the lion, his jaws all stained with blood! Here is the fierce tiger and the wild hyena, the filthy swine and the stupid asscreatures of all kinds come here and find shelter!

Who complains? I hear no voice lifting up its veto and crying, There is no room for the swine here. There is no room for the fierce tiger here. The ark was ordained on purpose to save some of every kind. And just so, our Savior, Jesus, receives all sorts of people into Himself. It is no marvel if this Man receives sinners! Fly here, you loving and tender doves! Come here, you sweet birds of purest song! But ho, you ravens, eagles, vultures, and birds of evil name, you hurry here, also, for the Ark receives all who come!

A very prominent type under the Levitical dispensation was the City of Refuge. If a man had slain another, he fled from the pursuer of blood with hot haste and swift foot. And he ran at once into the City of Refuge and the gates were shut and he was preserved. Now, Brethren, you would not have thought it a strange thing if you had seen a man-slayer flying to the city! You would have thought it far more singular if any came there but man-slayers! Why, you say, this city has been set up and ordained on purpose that men who have been men-slayers might find refuge within its walls, and therefore it is natural to find the red-handed man come fleeing here.

Beloved, Jesus Christ is the City of Refuge! Who should fly to Him but the sinner wanting refuge? And who should need shelter but those requiring sanctuary from the avenger of blood? When you see the guilty hastening to Jesus, you say, It is in keeping with the type, and it is no marvel whatever that He receives them. The scapegoat, again, was a very manifest type of the Messiah. They laid the sins of the people upon the scapegoats head and then it took all their iniquities away into the wilderness. Now, suppose some objecting critic had said, This goat which is set apart in the worship of God actually bears sins upon its head and here are sinful people coming to put their sins there. Who else should come? What was the meaning of the scapegoat, if there were no sin among the people of Israel? Come here today, not you righteousfor you need no scapegoatbut you sinful ones!

Here is the Sin-Bearer in type before you, set apart to bear the iniquity of the people. He is about to be driven into the wilderness to take sin away! Come here and put your sins upon him, for unless you come, the ceremony will have no meaning whatever! Look through any of the types, and with very few exceptions, the thought of sin is prominent and the doctrine that Christ is to come into the world to save sinners is clearly written upon the front of the whole set of types of the Old Testament.

Let us remark again that the metaphors which Christ has used to set Himself forth, many, if not all of them, imply that He receives sinners. What is written concerning Him? There shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. In our hymns, over and over and over again we delight to sing

*There is a fountain filled with blood,*   
and yet again   
*The fountain of Christ,   
Lord help us to sing.*   
Now what is the fountain for but for the cleansing of the filthy? Cleanse the already clean? Absurd! Why do they need it? If they are already pure, why do they need to wash? But the fact that there is provision made for great washing implies great filthiness and that the fountain is furnished with a purifying element of wondrous power, namely, precious blood, seems to indicate that it was meant for great sin, unheard-of sinsin which to the uttermost has polluted and defiled the frame of manhood. The Savior also describes Himself as a feast in many of His parables. A great king makes a supper, and oxen and fatlings are killed. Now for whom is a feast prepared but for the hungry? In the parables the feast is set not merely for hungry persons, but the blind, the halt and the lame are called and compelled to enter. The Savior would not have delighted to set Himself forth as waters except for the sake of thirsty ones, or as meat, had there been no famishing souls. Ho, everyone that thirsts, He says, come to the waters. And he that has no money, let him come buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Why all this to persons who have no needs? Sinners are those who have these needs, these hunger and thirst. And they are bid to come to Christ as the Gospel Feast! Moreover, the Master has been pleased to take to Himself one or two titles which imply that He came to receive sinners. He takes the title of Physician, but as He told these very Pharisees a little while before, The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. There is no practice for the physician in a neighborhood where every man is well. There must be sickness to involve the necessity for a physician. Why his art? Why his skill in pharmacy if men are safe and sound without it? And why Christ the Saviorthe Pardonerif none to save or forgive? There is no supererogation in the Bible, nothing superfluouswhy Christ a Physician, unless for the sick? He styles Himself very frequently the Redeemer, and saints in the olden times delighted to speak of Him as their Redeemer.

But a Redeemer for whom? Who wants redeeming but a slave? Who needs to be purchased into liberty but the man who is in hopeless bondage and cannot free himself from the chain? A redeemer for men already freehow can it be? He sets free not free men, but captives! He looses real and irksome fetters! He snaps not fictitious chains which fancy binds about fretful, frivolous personsHe breaks iron chains and snatches real yokes from off the necks of the thoroughly bound. There can be no Redeemer in the fullness of the title unless the persons are enslaved and His office must relate to such. I think I may distinctly say that if all the titles of the Savior do not involve or suppose the existence of sins, most do, and that either directly, or indirectly, they would furnish an argument to me to show that this Man came into the world to receive sinners. If more evidence were wanted, I would point you to the Saviors miracles. The miracles which the Savior performed were very few of them miracles of judgment. They were almost all miracles of mercy. They were performed upon the sick, symbolical of His spiritual miracles upon the morally sick. They were performed upon persons possessed of devils, as if to show at once that even the devilish element which enters into mans rebellion is not too strong for the Savior to conquer, or too foul for Him to touch. His miracles were sometimes worked on the dead and those, as you will remember, in different stages of corruption. The young child in Jairus chamber was yet sweet of flesh as though she had just fallen asleepHe quickened her. The young man at the gates of Nain was taken out to be buriedalready there were tokens which made the mother say, Let us bury our dead out of our sight. But the Almighty voice quickened him!   
As for Lazarus, he had been dead four days already, and his sister said, By this time he stinks. And as if to betoken that Jesus Christ can deliver not only from incipient sin, but from sin in its foulest stage of corruption and putridity, He spoke to Lazarus and said, Lazarus, come forth. These miracles must have had some meaning and some teaching. If He thus touched men and healed their natural infirmities, how can you think He will not, whose mission is mainly spiritual, heal spiritual infirmities? He might have said, and said truly, Though I heal you, that is not the grand design of My missionMy kingdom is not of this world, nor are my healings intended to be of this world, either, in their grandest development. I descended from Heaven to heal sick souls, to raise the spiritually dead and conquer disease in the realm of spirit, rather than in the physical world. This day every miracle of the Savior seems to cry to me, to you, Diseased souls, look to Jesus Christ and be saved! Did you ever observe how many of His parables, also, are to the same effecthow, time after time, as in the three memorable parables of the chapter before us, it is the sinner that He is teaching and it is Gods love in forgiving sin that He is endeavoring to set forth before the eyes which self-righteousness has made, alas, so dim and blind?   
He is constantly telling us of a vainglorious Pharisee whose prayer is a mass of reeking pride. And of a penitent Publican whose humble cry brings justification from on high. He speaks of two debtors who had nothing to pay, frankly forgivenand of the one who loved most, because he had most forgiven. He talks of a barren fig tree, spared to be dug about and fertilized, of a wounded man, pitied and succored by a good Samaritan. He tells us of loiterers admitted to the vineyard at the eleventh hour. And of poor, and halt, and lame entertained at a banquet of love. I need not continue longer in this strain, for I think the consistency of the fact is evident to you all. I can well picture before me Jesus Christ receiving sinners, but I cannot imagine Him, I cannot, with the utmost stretch of the imagination, picture Him as rejecting sinners. I cannot read of the rest of His life and then think of Him as saying, Stand back you unclean. I cannot suppose Him with a crowd before Him, crying, Far from Me, you ungodly! Keep a distance from this pure and sacred Being who condescends to look upon you! And I cannotI will not try, eitherI cannot fancy it possible that He will reject you, my dear Friend, if you go this morning into His Presence and humbly seek His face. It would be altogether a departure from His constant mode of action, and there can be no such departure for He is the same yesterday, today and forever! Thus, I think, we have shown the consistency of the fact with the Person and work of Christ. Observe the condescension of this fact. This Man, who towers above all other men holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinnersthis Man receives sinners! This Man, who is none other than the eternal God before whom angels veil their facesthis Man receives sinners! It needs an angels tongue to describe this mighty stoop of love! That any of us should be willing to seek after the lost seed of the house of Adam is nothing wonderfulthey are of our own race! But that He, the offended God against whom the transgression had been committedthat HE should take upon Himself the form of a servant and bear the sins of many, and should then, as Man, be willing to receive the vilest of the vile and blot out their transgressions and iniquitiesthis is marvelous!   
It is only rendered believable at all by the fact that God Himself declares it and that abundant witnesses testify to it. I do think that if, for the first time, any but God had told the angels of this, they could not have conceived it as true! And I do not wonder that sometimes sinners under a sense of sin cry out, It is too good to be true! It were, indeed, too good if it were looked at from our side of the question, but viewed as coming from God, the infinite Fountain of all bounty and mercy, it is believableit is joyfully certain! It is the greatest wonder in Heaven, or earth, or even in Hell! There is no marvel like the Truth of God that, The Word was made flesh and dwelt among usthat He who ever lives bowed His head to die for sinnersand having made atonement for sin, now receives the very chief of sinners into His hearts love and makes them His companions and His friends!   
Oh, will you kick against such condescension as this? Will your hearts be like iron when you think of such favor as this manifested to sinful men? Sinners, when God stoops, will you not stoop? When from the highest Heaven He seeks you, will you not seek Him? When you thus see His love so infinitely revealed, are there no drawings of heart, is there no melting of penitence towards the bleeding Savior? Surely cold drops of horror might stand even upon marble, or ooze forth from granite at the sound of Calvarys groans! And are there no tears in your eyes, no thoughts of melting, moving penitence when you mark such mercy and compassion manifested towards you? Jesus condescends to receive sinners and yet they stand out against Him! Be astonished, O heavens! Be ashamed, O earth! We do but touch that point and now let us notice the certainty of this fact. That this Man receives sinners is undeniable. Sometimes when the sinner comes, Jesus is standing on the doorstep and before he begins to knock, he is safe in the Saviors arms and finds himself forgiven before he has time to make a complete confession. At other times men have to knock, but the very first knock opens the door. Some of us stood knocking four or five years, unbelievingly knocking, but still knocking anxiously, craving mercy and not finding it. Ah, but we did find it after all! It does not say that He will show you that He has received you in the next minute or twothat He will pour peace into your spirit the first moment He receives youbut He will receive you!   
If He tarries, wait for Him! Knock and knock, and knock again, for there never yet was a soul that could say, I was a sinnerI went to this Man and He did not receive me. You are growing weary, are you, young man? These three or four months that you have been watching and praying have tried your patience. Ah, dear Brother, dont you see the Cross and the Savior hanging on it? If you look to Him, your time of suspense will doubtless be over at once! You have made a mistakedarkness has been over your eyes! You have been looking in the wrong placesto your feelings, your penitence, your faithrather than to Him! Or, if it is true that He has kept you waiting, yet wait on! Hope on, hope always! While the lamp holds out to burn, despair must not trample down your soul. Jesus must receive youHe did receive sinners once, and again, I bid you, remember that He is the same yesterday, today and forever! He must receive youcast yourself on Him and you shall find that He will receive you!   
There is a great multitude of people here this morning and yet among us all there is not one who can say, We sought the Lord and He would not receive us. But there are many hundreds here, who, though they had a sorry time of it in the season of conviction, yet can clap their hands and say, Truly, truly, the Master does manifest Himself to all who cry to Him in truth. Try Him, then, and you will find it true with you, too! I shall want you now, dear Friends, for a moment, to permit me to show the adaptation of this fact to many who are now present. This Man receives sinners, is an announcement well adapted to many of this congregation. It is so very plain. If it were a sentence which needed much explanation, it might not suit the multitude. There would be some who would think it over and say, Alas! Such a text hardly meets my case. It is a mystery! I cannot get at the bottom of it. But this is so simple, This Man receives sinners. You know what it is to be received into a house? You go, you knock, the door opens, you are received. This is all you have to do in the matter of salvation, too! You go as you are to Christ. You knock. You are received.   
It is a blessed sentence from its plainness. It is very blessed, too, from its personality. I can see

my name in it. You will say, How? Well, dear Friends, I wish you may be able to see yours. This Man receives sinners. It does not say He receives John, Hannah, Sarah, Mary or Thomasit says much better than thatit says, This man receives SINNERS. Now there may be a mistake about my name being Charles. And if I found it written in Gods Word that He received a person of my name, I should always be excessively anxious about the registration. I should be afraid lest I should not really be the person described. But when it says, He receives sinners, I am very clear about this meaning me, for I know I am a sinner. The devil himself, liar as he is, dares not say I am not a sinner! No, he oftentimes does me very good service by telling me how very clearly that is my name. And I never thank him for anything but thatthat he does sometimes help one to read his title clear by enabling one to see distinctly that he is a sinner! Well, you are a sinnerthen the text means youand, This man receives sinners. If you were in some country, say in the center of Africa, wandering about at night amidst a crowd of huts, wondering where you could find lodging for the night. If you saw a board put up very legibly printed with these words, This person receives white men, why you would say to yourself, That is it. You would not care that it did not say, This person receives John Smith or Tom Brown. It would be quite enough for you, He receives white men.   
You are a white man and you would say, He receives me. Now, this Man receives sinners, you are a sinnerthen He will receive you. Suppose we reverse it, and there were put up a notice in one of our streets, At this house they receive black men. Now, I cannot conceive any black man saying, They will not receive me because I am so very black. Why, he would say, It says they will receive me and the more black I am the more certainly is this invitation meant for me. If I am a jet-black man, then I am very black and they will, with less hesitation receive me. I cannot suppose a half-caste man saying, Well, I have a little white in me, therefore I feel sure they will take me. He might feel proud of it, but then there would come afterwards the thought, I am not so clear that this is meant for me, if I am not all black.   
So if there are any of you who are a little self-righteous and say, I do not know whether I am such a sinner as some people are, you may doubt whether you are a sinner. But you who know you are sinners right through to the backbonesinners everywhere and every waythere cannot be any doubt about you, your name is as clearly there as possible! There is plainness and there is personality. But there is presentness, too. This Man receives sinners. Sometimes on the doorsteps of workhouses you may see a very sorry sight late at nighta company of men, women and boys crowding on the doorstep to spend the night there because they came too late. There must be an hour when the workhouse must be shut and the refuge for the night closed, but they arrived too late and outside they must be kept.   
But you never saw a soul shivering outside Christs door on the doorstep of eternal ruin because it came too late in this life! There was the thiefhe had a hard run for it, but he just reached the door in time. Without doubt it is written on the top of my Masters door, This Man receivesat all times and at all seasonsthis Man receives sinners. It will be a dolorous day for you, some of you, if you die as you now are, when this sentence will be blotted out and you will see written over the door of Mercy, This Man received sinners. Then it will be the Hell of your hells that He did receive sinners once, but that you never came! That when it was said, He receives sinners, you passed by carelessly and proudly and would not enter. And now mercy is a thing of the past and you are shut up where hope can never come, in the flames of Hell!   
But as long as life lasts, dear Hearers, that inscription stands in all its glorious presentness, This Man receives sinners. Do observe the unqualified sense in which the sentence is put, This Man receives sinners. But how? What sort of sinners? How are they to feel? How are they to come? Not a word is said about their coming, or their preparation, but simply, This Man receives sinners. Some sinners came to Christ walking. Others came to Christ limping on crutches, having lost a legHe never turned any away because they came on crutches. One man came on his bedindeed, he did not come, but was brought by other people. Jesus received him all the same for that. There were some who did not seek the Lord at all, but Christ Jesus came to them and received them by a blessed victory of Divine Grace. He receives sinners and the only stipulation that is put in at all is, whoever will, let him take the water of life freely. If you will, take! If you have a will to Christif God has given you a will towards Christ Jesusand if you have nothing beyond that willno feelings, no emotions, no works, no experience which could qualify you for Him. If you do but willWhoever will, let him take of the water of life freelyThis man receives sinners.   
Sometimes if you want to get a child into an Orphan Asylum, you might just as well keep the child yourself as go through the expense and trouble of working to get the child inthere are so many difficulties to be encountered in effecting your design. If you want to get to Jesus Christ, there is no trouble, no expense. Going to Jesus Christ is coming to an open door of mercy. The city of the New Jerusalem, you remember, had four gates and we are told none of them are ever shut, they are not shut at all by day and there is no night there. So that come as we may, This Man receives sinners just as they come to Him.   
II. Now, I wanted to speak upon the second head, but I had not sufficient forethought to store up the time, so we must only say of that just thisJesus Christ, having once received sinners, enters into the most familiar and endearing communion with them that is possible. HE FEASTS WITH THEMtheir joys are His joystheir work for God is His work for God. He feasts with them at their table and they with Him at His table and He does this wherever the table is spread. It may be in a attic, or in a cellarin a wilderness, or on a mountainHe still eats with them. He does this now in the ordinances and means of Grace by His Spirit. And this He will do in the fullness of Glory when He takes these sinners up to dwell with Him. Sinners are not merely permitted the parings of mercy, but the very marrow and fatness! They are not only allowed to sit and dip their feet in the margin of the stream, but they may wade in and find it a river to swim inthey shall not, in Heaven, sit in the outer circlethey shall draw near the Throne and reign with Jesus! There is nothing which Christ will not give to sinners. They shall be crowned. They shall have harps of gold. They shall dwell in the many mansions near to God Himself!   
There is no second and lower party, as it wereHe does not receive sinners and put them at the lower end of the table, below the salt. He receives sinners and eats with them! He receives them into the soul and flower of Christian life and Christian privilege among all the favored saints of the celestial courts! I would to God I had time to plead this matter home with some who are here this morning and who are not Believers in Jesus. Oh, Sinner, trust my Master and you shall be saved! May the Spirit of God make you trust Him now! I know your sense of unworthiness. I know you feel you are not fit to come. But He says nothing about fitness, so why should you say it? Christ lays down no conditions, so why do you make conditions? This Man receives sinners.   
Why, says Bunyan, I felt myself such a sinner once that I could do nothing but fly to Christ. And if He had had a drawn sword in His hand, the terrors of Hell were so dreadful that I could have borne the terrors of that drawn sword to escape from the wrath of God. But here, instead of the drawn sword is the warm loving heart! Fly to it, Sinner! God help you to fly now, that you may be saved! If He should reject you, come and tell me. I would not knowingly preach a lying Gospeland if you can prove to me that He does not receive sinners, we will have a Sunday service and preach that the Gospel has failed, for we will preach the truth of Him and not speak falsely for God. When you find He rejects a coming sinner, let us hear it, that our hopes may no longer be as bright and high as they are now!   
Try the Lord Jesus, Sinner! Taste and see that the Lord is good! Come to Jesus now! Come as you are! Come now to Him! You need not stop to get to your houses to bend your knees to pray. One cry, one tear, one LOOK with the believing eye will do it. Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth. While we thus preach, may the Master enter into your hearts by His Spirit and may you be led to Him, and we will praise Him together, world without end. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 15.*  
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UNTIL HE FINDS IT   
NO. 2821

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 8, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 28, 1877.

**Until he finds it.   
Luke 15:4.**

IT was not just anybody who went after the sheep that was lostit was the person to whom the lost sheep belonged. Our Savior said, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he finds it? The man was not a hunter, looking after wild game that was not his, in order to make it his by capturing it, but he was a sheep-masterone who owned the sheep, going out to find what was already his own property. This is one of the great secrets that explain the care of the Good Shepherdin looking for the lost sheep, He is caring for that which is His own. He says of them, in His great intercessory prayer to His Father, Yours they were, and You gave them to Me. Long before this world was created, or stars began to shine, even in the eternal ages of the past, God had given to His beloved Son a people who were then and there His by His Fathers gift. In the fullness of time He redeemed them and so they became doubly His. Yet they were His, in plan and purpose, from eternity! They were, therefore, His when they wandered away from Him and His while they strayed further and yet further off from Himyes, they were always His wherever they went! This Truth of God is well put by the writer of the lines we have so often sung

*Lord, You have here Your ninety and nine, Are they not enough for You?   
But the Shepherd made answer, This of Mine Has wandered away from Me   
And although the road is rough and steep, I go to the desert to find My sheep.*

That wandering sheep did not belong to anybody else but that particular sheep-master. If any other man had taken it into his fold, he would have had no right to do so. If anyone had caught it and slain and eaten it, he would have been a thief for it was not his sheep. It belonged to the man who owned the other 99 sheep and it was because it belonged to him that he went after it. He would not have gone to seek another mans sheephe sought it because it was his own. And, in like manner, Christ has come into the world to seek His own. He Himself said, The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. And the Apostle Paul wrote, Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. The main object and design which He had in coming to this earth was to seek His own. His great redemptive work has brought some good to all men, but it was more especially intended for the benefit of the household of faith. As Paul wrote to Timothy, We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe. The great purpose of His coming is in order to seek His own, whom His Father has given to Himthat none of them may be lost at the last.

Remembering this great Truth, we shall now consider these four words, Until he finds it. Until is something like a boundary mark set up to indicate a turning-point. And we shall first consider the dark side of this, until, and then come over into the bright side of it.

I. Looking, first, on THE DARK SIDE OF THIS, UNTIL, we will try to answer two questions. First, where is the sheep until the Shepherd finds it? Secondly, where is the Shepherd until He finds it?

First, then, where is the sheep until the Shepherd finds it? Mark, dear Friends, the pronoun in our text, until He [speaking of Christ] finds it. It is the Shepherd who finds the lost sheep. True salvation comes to the sinner by Jesus Christ finding him. You and I, if we are very earnest in seeking the souls of others, may readily find the lost ones, for they are all around usperhaps in our own families, possibly they nestle even in our bosoms. We know well enough where the lost ones are, for we cannot walk the streets of London, or the lanes of country villages without discovering them. If we ask the city missionary where we can find those that are most evidently lost, he will tell us where they live in whole colonies! He knows where any quantity of them may be found. Now, our finding of them may be a means to an end, but it is only a means. The end must be Christs finding them, if they are really to be saved. Otherwise, it will not be of much use for the schoolmaster to find them. Though it may do them some good and be a temporal advantage to them, it will not be much good for the blessings of civilization to find them, or for them to be lifted up out of poverty. All these processes may be useful in their measure, but, as far as the eternal salvation of the lost is concerned, it all depends upon Christ finding them. He, the unique Man, the all-glorious God, must come into contact with them through His Spirit and claim them as His ownfor, until that happens, they will remain in the sad, sad state of which I am now going to speak. I like that idea of the Chinese convert who, when he was applying for Baptism and membership at San Francisco, and was asked, How did you find Jesus answered, I no find Jesus at allHe find me. It is almost unnecessary to add that he was accepted upon such a testimony!

Where, then, are lost sinners until Christ finds and saves them? Well, first, they are in a very careless state. They are here compared to sheep, partly because of their stupidity, but also because of their aptness to wander. A sheep thinks nothing of wanderingit is sport to him to have his liberty. Perhaps he enjoys himself all the more in being free from the pen and the fold. The sheep does not think at all about the shepherd seeking him. The shepherd has wide-open eyes for the sheep, but the sheep, while he is wandering, has no eyes for the shepherd. The shepherd is pursuing him, hot foot, over hill and dale, but the sheep is carelessly eating what little grass it is able to find, thinking only of the present and making itself as happy as it can without a thought of the future. This is still the condition of the great mass of our fellow men. Until Christ finds them, they are thoughtless, careless, indifferent about eternal things. Oh, that they could but be led to think, for thoughtfulness is oftentimes evidence that He has found them! But they decline to think. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? How shall we be clothed? these are the questions that interest them! Their chief concern is, to kill time, though, indeed, they have no time to loseto hurry away the hours which are already far too fleetthis seems to be their principal occupation. Just as the sheep cannot think and will not think, so neither will the sinnerhe will continue in his carelessness, indifference and brutishness until the Savior finds him.   
More than this, the sheep, until it is found by its owner, is very apt to wander further and yet further away, just as sinners go on from one sin to another. It is not the nature of sin to remain in a fixed state. Like decaying fruit, it grows more rottenthe corruption is sure to increase and spread. The man who is bad today will, to a certainty, be worse tomorrow. Every week that he lives he adds some new evil habit to all that he had before, until the chain, which at first seemed but a silken cord, becomes, at last, an adamantine fetter in which he is held fast so that he cannot escape. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, it is impossible to say how far men will wander away from God! If restraining Grace is not brought to bear upon them, they will certainly go to unutterable lengths of infamy and guilt. Possibly someone who is here now is wandering further and yet further away. My Friend, let me remind you that you can do, today, what you could not have done seven years ago. You laugh now at things that would have made you shudder thenand language which made your blood run cold when you first left your mothers knee, has now become habitual with you. Yes, and certain tricks in trade, which you oftentimes condemned at the first, have now become your regular practice. Ah, yes, the wandering sheep keeps on straying further and further awayit will not come back to the fold of its own accord, but will continue to wander until the shepherd finds it.   
And, until then, the sheep is in a sad condition all the while. It dreams of happiness by wandering, but it finds none. A sheep is not a proper animal to run wild. It is unable to take care of itself as a great many wild creatures can do. As corn, which is but educated grass, seems to yield a harvest nowhere but where man sows it, so a sheep seems to be entirely dependent on man. If it would do well, it must be under a shepherds care. A sheep running wild is out of its elementit is in a condition in which it cannot flourish or be happy. And a man without God, and without Christ, cannot possibly be blessed. You may think you can do as well without God as with Him, but as soon might a lamp burn without oil, or the lungs heave in life without airas well might you attempt to live without food as for your soul to truly and really live without God! The very best of you, if you are without Christ, are simply great ruinslike some dilapidated castle, or abbey which you sometimes seethere may be enough of the ancient building remaining to let us guess what it once was, and what it might again be if the original builder could come back and restore it to its pristine glory, but as it is, it is an utter ruin and bats and owls make their home there.   
So is it with you if you are without Christ. Your heart is nothing but a cage of unclean birds. Your mind is full of doubts and forebodings. You are often unable to sleep because of your dread of the future. And when you come to die, then will your desolation be most evident, for, away from God you are like a fish out of the water, or like a diver, under the water, cut off from the supply of air which is essential to his life. The creature cannot do without the Creator! God can be blessed without us, but we cannot be blessed without Him!   
We shall realize that the wandering sheep is in a sad condition if we only think of the loss to itself through its strayingbut there is far more than that involved in its wandering. There is, also, the loss to the shepherd. That is the blessed mystery underlying our Saviors words. The main loss was that of the shepherdit was that fact that moved him, as the owner of the lost sheep, to seek after it until he found it. And this made him rejoice so much when he did find it, for he could not bear the thought of losing it. To be lost to Christ may, perhaps, seem to some of you who are careless and thoughtless, to be but a trifling matter. If the wandering sheep could have spoken, it might have said, I do not want to belong to the shepherd. I know that he values me and that he is seeking me because I am his, but I do not care about that. No, poor sheep, but, if you had been the shepherd, you would have cared and, poor Sinner, if you did but know even a little of what Christ feels, you, also, would begin to care about your own soul! Oh, it is such joy, such bliss as I cannot describe, for anyone to be able to say, The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. It brings tears to my eyes even as I repeat those familiar words and meditate upon their meaning.   
What a blessing it is to belong to Jesus! I do not know a sweeter song than this, My Beloved is mine, and I am His. To belong to Jesus, to be one of the sheep in His flock, to know that He is my Shepherd and that I follow Him because I recognize His voice, oh, this is Heaven upon earth! This is the beginning of the joy of Heaven itself! I wish all of you knew it, but, alas, many of you are like the sheep that was lost to the shepherd. If he counted up the 99 and rejoiced that they were safe, yet he heaved a sigh as he said, I have lost one sheep out of my hundred, and he could not bear the thought of losing even one of them. In the same way, some of you are, as yet, lost to Christ and lost to the great Father who is in Heavenand that is very sad.

There was also another sad thing, namely, that the sheep was in constant danger. It was away from its natural protector. It was subject to weariness, drought, hunger, diseaseand it was in continual danger from predators. It might die for need of care. It would, certainly, at last, perish altogether and be torn by the foul creatures that would feast upon its carcass. In like manner, a sinner without a Savior is always in dangeras I have already shown youin danger of still worse sin, in danger of death, in danger from the devil, in danger of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. Oh, the terrible danger of every unregenerate man! If I see a child almost run over in the street, it curdles my blooddoes it not have a similar effect upon you? When you see a man knocked down in the road, even though he gets up and walks away, you feel troubled lest he should be hurt. Do you feel like that when you think about the souls of men that are in a far more terrible dangerin jeopardy of the wrath of God which abides upon them even now, and which will abide upon them forever in that dread place of torment, where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched? Pity the poor sheep until the shepherd finds it, for its condition is most sad! And, poor unconverted Sinner, we would also pity you until the Savior finds you, for your state is terribly sad, too.   
Now I turn to the second questionWhere is the Shepherd until He finds the wandering sheep? Ah, Brothers and Sisters, you know well enough where He is! He is seeking His sheep which is lost and He will keep on seeking until He finds it. He is very skillful in following the tracks of the wanderer, just as some shepherds seem to be able to train their sheep almost as a bloodhound will follow a trail. It is wonderful how Christ follows the track of some people. I have known them go from place to place, yet the Good Shepherd has never been far away from them. When they were children, He sought them in the hymns they learned, in their teachers earnest admonitions, in their mothers entreaties and their fathers prayers. When they became young men and young women and shook off their former instructors, the Good Shepherd still followed them by many a helpful book and many a holy remembrance which they could not shake off. When they went into businessand neglected the Sabbath and forsook the house of Godthe Good Shepherd still tracked them by affliction, by Christian neighbors, by the very sound of the church bell, by the death of old companions and in a hundred other ways.   
It may be that some went off to America, or Canada in the hope of escaping from the influences of religion, but it was no use. You remember the backwoodsman who had begun to make a log hut and had not finished before up rode a Methodist minister with his saddlebags? With an oath the settler said, Why, I have moved a dozen times to get away from you fellows, but wherever I move, one of you is sure to come to me. Yes, said the good man, and wherever you go, you will find us. If you go to Heaven, you will find us there. And if you go to Hell, he added, I am afraid that you will find some Methodist preachers even there. You had better give in, for we shall always be after you. If you are really one of Christs sheep, something of this sort will happen to you and, wherever you may wander, you will find Christ is still after you! If you go to the uttermost parts of the earth, He will follow you. If you land at some far distant port where you think you may indulge without restraint in vice, even there the Divine Love of Christ will nurse you. I know one who now preaches the Gospel, who was on board a ship at Shanghai and, that very night, a Prayer Meeting was being held in the College on his behalf, as his brother was one of our students. And while they were praying, the Lord struck him down, turned him from his sins almost without any visible instrumentand he returned home and confessed his faith in Christ! The Lord Jesus is well acquainted with sinners tracks and He will pursue them until He finds them!  
Notice what blessed perseverance the shepherd manifestsUntil he finds it. There is the wandering sheep, toiling up that steep hill. So up that hill goes the shepherd. Why does he climb like that? Because the sheep has gone that way and he must follow it till he finds it. Now it has gone down the other side and across that green morass where, if a man should slip, he might sink and lose his life. Yes, but the shepherd will go after that wandering one till he finds it. Day after day, from the rising to the setting of the sun and all through the night, nothing can stop the shepherds feet until he has his sheep that was lost, safe upon his shoulders! And how blessed is the perseverance of the Savior that He will not take our rejection as a final refusal, but still gives us fresh proclamations and invitations of Grace! Again and again He sends out His servants to bid the sinner come to the Gospel feastnot only on the Sabbath, but on week-days as well, the voice of Wisdom cries aloud, Turn in here and feast upon the bounteous provision of redeeming love. There are none so persevering as Christ isHe shall not fail nor be discouraged, but shall press on in His earnest search for His lost sheep until He finds it!   
A man who is seeking lost sheep must display great wisdom because it is very difficult to find the tracks of the sheep. And the Divine wisdom which was displayed when some of us were brought to God will cause us everlasting wonderment! It is a marvelous thing that sometimes a mans sin, though it looks as though it must damn him, has been part of the very means by which he has obtained salvation. I knew one who never recollected having told a lie until, upon a certain occasion, he was caught unaware and said what was untrue. And then he was covered with such shame and confusion of face that he saw all his boasted selfrighteousness melt away and he went and humbled himself before God and so found peace and pardon! Some have allied themselves to evil companions who seemed likely to lead them further into sin, yet, before long, those very companions have been converted and have been the means of leading them to the Savior! Christ will have His sheep, somehow or other. He will lay hold of them and if they will not be brought in one way, they shall be in another! Some have been found by Him in the darkest dens of infamy. His all-piercing eyes have been able to see them even there. Some have been won by gentleness and kindnessothers by terror and distress. But, in one way or another, with wondrous perseverance, Jesus seeks the lost until He finds them! And He will never give up the search until the last of His wandering sheep is brought back to the fold.   
Where is the Good Shepherd until He finds His sheep? Why, He is in a state of discontent, with yearning heart and troubled brow. If you say to Him, Good Shepherd, why did You not go home to Your Father when first the Jews sought to stone You? Why did you not ascend in splendor from amidst the ungodly throng? He will tell you that He could not give up seeking His sheep till He found them by redemption and that now He must still continue yearning over sinners until He finds them. Do you not sympathize with Him in this feeling? If you are a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot be at ease while souls are being lost! I fear that it would not matter in the least to some professors whether a whole nation was lost or saved! They would be just as comfortable, whatever happened. But they who have the spirit of Christ and are in sympathy with Him, have hearts of compassion so that the loss of any one sinner fills them with dismayand the penitence of any one sinner makes their heart rejoice with exceeding joy! May we always cultivate that spirit!   
II. But now I must turn to THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THAT LANDMARK, UNTIL. I am going to ask the same questions as before, but will put the second first and the first second.   
First, then, where is the Shepherd when He finds His sheep? I can answer this question, for I remember where He was when He found me. The first sight I had of Him was a very vivid one. Where was He then? Well, He was just where I was! The sheep and the Shepherd stood together but Christ was where I ought to have been by reason of my sin. Christ was accursed because I was cursed by my sin. Christ was made sin because I was a sinner, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Oh, what a sight was thatChrist in my place! I have preached about it many years, yet it always makes me wonder just as it did at the first. What an overwhelming thought it seemed, and yet how full of joy! O poor Soul, if you would have a true sight of Christ, see Him suffering, dying, forsaken of His God and full of agony because the chastisement of your peace was upon Him!   
The Shepherd was also standing over the lost sheepnot merely near it, but looking down upon it. How pleased, how delighted, He was to have found His sheep which was lost! Well do I remember when I saw my Lord looking down upon me with eyes of unspeakable love. I could hardly believe He could ever have loved me soit seemed to be almost incredible! What could He see in me to lovea poor sheep with torn fleece, footsore and wearyand not worth the trouble He had taken to find me? When a queen picks up a pin, it is nothing in comparison with Christ taking me up and caring for me! For some great emperor to fall in love with a milkmaid may not be anything amazing, for she may have as sweet a face as ever graced any empress, but as for us sinners, there is no beauty in us that Christ should desire us! By nature, we were full of evil and by practice, too, we became even worseyet Jesus loved us and, as a shepherd rejoices over the wandering sheep that he finds and brings home, or as a father rejoices over his lost child whom he has found, or as a young man rejoices over his bride, so did the Lord Jesus rejoice over us when He found us

*And all through the mountains   
And up from the rocky steep,   
There arose a cry to the gate of Heaven   
Rejoice! I have found My sheep!   
And the angels echoed around the Throne, Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!*

We also saw Him, at that time, as bearing the marks of the toil and travail which He had endured on our behalf. There are the tokens on the shepherds face, and on the shepherds hands and on the shepherds garments, of the rough way that he has trodden. If the sheep could but know, it might read, in the very look of him, the price that he had to pay for its recovery. And so, dear Friends, was it with us when Jesus saved us. We looked up and saw Him with His face stained with the spit of men, His head encircled by the crown of thorns, His body covered with the bloody sweat and His hands, and feet, and side all pierced! And as we looked, we loved Him because He had first loved us, and loved us so wondrously!

One thing more about the shepherd when he found the lost sheep, he was grasping it, for I guarantee you that there was not a moment between his getting near it and his grasping it. No, no, he seemed to say, you will not get away from me again. I have caught you, and I will hold you fast. Do we not remember the grip that Christ gave us when He first found us? We were apprehended by Him whom we now have apprehended. We were held fast by Him whom now we hold fast by faith and love. We felt, then, as if a strange power had seized usnot that we resisted it, for we rejoiced in it. We were led, with full consent against our own willthat is, against our old willbut with a new will which we felt put within us by that blessed hand which had laid hold of us and which would not let us go!

But where was the sheep when the shepherd found it? Why there was but an instant and the sheep was on the shoulders of the shepherd! And what does that indicate but that when Christ finds me, then He bears me and all that is upon me, upon His shouldersall my diseases, all my sin, and all my sorrows are laid upon Him! We rightly sing

*I lay my sins on Jesus,*   
but I think we ought also to sing   
*I lay myself on Jesus.*   
All that I am, and all that I have, all is there! Of Benjamin, Moses said, The Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders. That is where we are, between the shoulders of the Divine Shepherd of souls! Christ underneath us bearing all our weightthe weight of sin, the weight of sorrow, doubt, fear, and care and whatever else there may be upon us.   
What about the sheep now? Well, it is restingnot as it will rest, byand-by, when it will lie in the Shepherds bosom in yet sweeter fellowship, but, even now it is resting. It has not to carry itself back to the fold. It is a long way, but neither the Shepherd nor the sheep will get weary. It is a toilsome way, full of dangers, but those boils and dangers are for the Shepherd rather than for the sheep. We are right in singing

*Safe in the arms of Jesus*   
for now that He has found us, we are under His protection. No wolf can come near us now, or, if he did, he would be quite unable to hurt us. The sheep that is found is perfectly secure in the Good Shepherds grip. It could not stray away even if it could. If it struggled to get free, He would grip it all the more firmly. So, Beloved, was it with uswhen Christ took us on His shoulders, He held us fast and He will not let us go.

On whose shoulders was the sheep? It was on the shoulders of the rejoicing one who had found it and you and I belong to the Christ who is glad to find us! I wonder which was the happier of the two, in the feast, when the younger son came homethe son or the father? I think the father was and, certainly, of the shepherd and the sheep, the shepherd was the happierand yet the sheep, in being found, must have participated in the shepherds joy. Do you not remember how, when you were saved, you nestled down under the wings of the Eternal? I love to see the little chicks beneath the feathers of the hen, peeping out with such sweet contentment and a sense of perfect security expressed in their twinkling eyes. Had they been away from their mothers wings, they would have been afraid, but, under their mothers protection, they did not seem at all alarmed. So have I cowered down beneath the wings of God, trusting to that blessed promise, He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust. O Beloved, it is a blessed thing to know that we are held in the grip of a strong Christ, with great joy in His heart which is the proof of the value that He sets upon us, and the love which He bears towards us!

So you see that there is a great deal in these four words, until he finds it. Where are you now, my Friend? Are you still lost? What a joy it is to think that the Good Shepherd is still seeking lost sheep! But, if you have seen Christ near you, oh, that you may, by His Grace, this very hour, be caught up by His pierced hands and laid upon His everlasting shoulders and so be carried to the heavenly fold! The Lord grant it! This is what you need and what you must have if you are really to be saved. You must be saved in the Lord. Christ Jesus must save youit must be by His blessed hands and His almighty power that you must be rescued from danger and saved from going down to the Pit. May He soon find all of you who are lost and carry you on His shoulders all the way to the eternal fold above, for His dear names sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 17.**

Verse 1. These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come. That tremendous hour which was the very hinge of historythat hour in which He must suffer, bleed and die to pay the ransom price for His peopleFather, the hour is come.

1. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You. In the endurance of the Cross there was a mutual glorification. It was the time of the Saviors humiliation and yet, in a certain sense, He was never so glorious as when He died upon the tree. Then, too, He glorified His Father, vindicating Divine Justice and manifesting Divine Love.

2. As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. Christ, by His death, had power given Him over all fleshthat is the universal aspect of it. But there was a special purpose hidden within itthat He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

3. And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. Do you really know the only true God and Jesus Christ, His Son? Have you been brought into such familiar acquaintance with God as to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior? Then you have eternal life and you may rejoice that you have a life like that of God, Himself, which can never die!

4. I have glorified You on the earth; I have finished the work which You gave me to do. What a blessed thing that our Savior was able to say this just before His death! Oh, that you and I may be able to utter some humble echo of this speech when we come to the end of our lives! This is indeed a life worth living!

5. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. Take Me up from earth again. Clothe Me again with that glory which, for a while, I have laid aside.

6. I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your word. What high praise this was of Christs disciples! They have kept Your word. Poor creatures that they were, they often turned aside from the right path. They were oftentimes very ignorant and very willful, yet the Lord knew that their hearts were right towards Him and that they willed to learn, and desired to believe. So He saw in them what was often hidden, even from themselves, and He testified to His Father, They have kept Your word.

7, 8. Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me. Every preacher of the Gospel should see to it that this is true concerning himself. When we pass on to the people the words which God has given to us, we supply them with real spiritual fool and so we glorify God. But if we only give them our own words, we do but mock their hunger and we dishonor God. Our blessed Master, though quite able to speak His own original thoughts, kept to the words of His Fatherlet us be careful to imitate His example.

8, 9. And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours. There was a special request in Christs prayer, now that He was nearing the end of His earthly life. He concentrated His intercessions upon the chosen people for whom He was about to shed His blood.

10, 11. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. The disciples were going to be left alone and Christs tender heart made Him lessen the pain of the separation by offering this great petition on their behalf.

11. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are. This was as though He had said, You have given them to Me, My Father, to become My bride. And now I am about to die and return to You, I give back this bride of Mine into Your charge. Take care of her, I pray You, till I can come back again and receive her unto Myself. There is such holy unity between these Divine Persons of the Godhead that the Father first gives the elect to Christ and then Christ commits the elect into the Fathers keeping.

12, 13. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in them. Are you dull and sad today? Does anything depress your spirits? It is not according to your Saviors mind that you should be unhappy. It is His will and purpose that His joy should be fulfilled in you. Ask for a sip from His cup of joy at this momentone drop of His joy will make the dullest to be bright and the saddest to be glad!

14. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. He was a stranger here and His people are also strangers and foreigners. We are not so much to be unworldly as to be other-worldly. We belong to another world, to another Kingdom, even the Kingdom of Heaven!

15. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One. Keep them in the world to battle with the Evil One. Make them the salt that prevents putrefaction and let them not lose their savor, let them not be contaminated by the evil in the midst of which they dwell.

16, 17. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth. It looks as though our Lord almost anticipated that question of Pilate, What is truth? Here is His answerYour word is truth.

18. As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. Christ was the Sent One and every Christian is also sent. All Believers should be missionaries, sent forth upon a mission to bless the sons of men.

19, 20. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word. Christ knew that His Church would grow. He did not merely pray for the little handful of disciples who were with Him there, but He prayed for all who, in later years, would believe on Him.

21. That they all may be one. That is the great prayer of Christ. There are not two churches, but one Church. Christ is not the Head of two bodiesHe has but one mystical body. There is but one Bridegroom and there is but one bridethat bride is His indivisible Church. Hence His prayer, That they all may be one.

21. As You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. Can the world believe in Christ till His Church becomes more manifestly one? I fear not, so let us, each one, aim at the true unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ. There are some who aim at this by separating themselves from everybody else, but I do not see how they promote unity in that way. I clearly and painfully see how they increase divisions and multiply strife wherever they go. But let us, Beloved, to the utmost of our power, promote the unity of the body of Christ.

22, 23. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and You in Me. Do you understand this wonderful union? Jesus Christ in youI in them. And then the Father in Christand You in Me.

23. That they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me. This is a wonderful Truth of Godthat the Father loves the Church even as He loves Jesus Christ, His Son. When shall the world ever know this till the unity of the Church is more clearly seen?

24-26. 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. O Righteous Father, the world has not known You, but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them. Oh, for a blessed fulfillment of that prayer in our experience this very moment, for Christs sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK410, 377.   
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OUR GREAT SHEPHERD FINDING THE SHEEP   
NO. 2065

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, JANUARY 27, 1889.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. Spurgeon,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS DAY EVENING, MARCH 25, 1888.

**Until he finds it. And when he has found it. And when he comes home. Luke 15:4, 5, 6.**

THE love of Jesus, the Great Shepherd, is very practical and active. There is a sheep lost and the Lord regrets it. But His love does not spend itself in regrets. He arises and goes forth to seek and to save that which was lost. The love of Jesus Christ is love not in word only but in deed and in truth. The love of Jesus is prudent. He does not wait until the sheep is willing to return, or until it makes some attempt to come back. But no sooner is its lost estate known to the Shepherd than He starts off, that He may find that which was lost. The love of Jesus to the lost sheep is preeminent. He leaves the ninety-nine in their pasturage. And for a while forgets them, that all His heart, His eyes, His strength may be given to the one that has gone astray. O sweet love of Christ, so practical, so prudent, so pre-eminent! Let us ask for Divine Grace that we may imitate it, especially those of us who are called to be shepherds of men.

Among Gods people most of the saints have a charge to watch over. However little the flock may be, even if it is restricted to our own family, or to the little class that gathers about us on the Sabbath, we are all our brothers keeper in some measure. Let us learn the love of Christ, that we may be wise in shepherding. Let us not talk about our friends and say we love them. But let us show it by earnest, personal, speedy endeavors to do them good. Let us not wait until we see some goodness in themuntil they seek after instruction. But, Oh, come, let us go and find them. In the paths of death they roam.

And long before they have a thought of coming home, let us be on their track, eager to grasp them, if by any means we may save some. Oh, to have in our hearts such love of souls that it engrosses us so that we forget earthly needs and only remember this yet higher necessity! It is a good house, said St. Bernard, in which Martha has to complain of Marywhere gracious pursuits put other work in the background. It is a choice crime that men should even grow lax about their lower business for a while, that they may devote their chief energy to the saving of the lost sheep. Let that stand as an introduction. May we see the love of Jesus, as Bernard saw it and we shall have had sermon enough.

In my text there are three periods to which I call your attention I. Christ, the Good Shepherd, first seeks the lost sheep UNTIL HE FINDS IT. Just put a mark under those words. That is our first head Until He finds it. It is a long reach Until He finds it.

I like the expression. The Lord Jesus did not come down to earth to make an attempt to find men but He came to do it and He did it. He tarried here, seeking the lost sheep till He found itHe never gave over till His work was done. At this hour, in His work of grace among His chosen, He does not make an attempt at their salvation and suffer defeat. But He keeps at soul-seeking work until He find it.

Look at the seeking shepherdhe is looking for the sheep. Notice his anxious countenance until he finds it. We read that after he found it he rejoiced. But there is no rejoicing until he finds it. He is all excitement, quick of ear to catch the faintest sound, for it may be the bleating of his lost sheep. His eyes are like the eyes of eagles. He saw something stir in the fern, yonder, and he will be there in a bound or two. He is so eager. Noit was a mistake. It was not the sheep. Perhaps it was some frightened fox. He climbs a hill and from the top of it he looks all around. I was about to say that he looks with ears and eyes together. He puts his whole soul into the organs of watchfulness, if perhaps he may discern the sheep.

Is there a smile on his face? Ah, no! Not until he finds it. His whole soul is in his eyes and ears until he finds it. This is a faint, yet true picture of that Great Shepherd who came here to seek His flock. So the Evangelists have drawn Him in their pen-and-ink sketches of himalways watchfulspending night and day in prayers and tears and entreaties never more to have a joy until He finds the lost one. Then, when He did find a single sheep, finding His meat and His drink in it and becoming refreshed from the fact that He has so far accomplished His beloved work, the great Shepherd is all energy, care and concentration of thought concerning His sheep, until He finds it.

There is no hesitating with Jesus. The sheep is lost and the news is brought to the Shepherd. He girds His loose robe about Him and is on the way. He knows within a little while which way that stray sheep will go and He is on its track at once, though He knows that He must mark that track with His blood. See the blessed Shepherd pressing on? There is no pausing nor resting until He finds it. He has made up His mind that no sheep of His shall be lost and He flies over hill and dale after the wanderer until He finds it.

If you look into our Shepherds face, there is no trace of anger there. He does not say, Oh, that I should be worried with this silly sheep thus going astray! No thought is there but that of anxious love. It is all love and nothing else but love before He finds and until He finds it. And you may be sure that careful tenderness will be in full action after He has found it. He is looking with anxious eyes of love. As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies but that he should turn unto Me and live. Until He finds it there will be no thought of anxiety but a fullness of pitying care for the lost sheep.

And, mark, there is no giving up. That sheep has wandered now for many hours. The sun has risen and the sun has set. Or, at least it is just going down. But as long as the shepherd can see and the sheep is still alive, he will pursue it until he finds it. He has been disappointed a great many times. And when he thought that he should have found it, he has missed itbut still, he will never give it up. He is impelled onward by irresistible love, and he must continue his weary search until he finds it. It was precisely so with our Lord Jesus Christ. When He came after you and after me, we ran from Him but He pursued uswe hid from Him but He discovered usHe had almost grasped us but so long as we eluded Him He still pursued with love unwearied until He found us.

Oh, if He had given up after the first ten yearsif He had ceased to care for some of us after fifty different occasions in which we had choked conscience and quenched the Spirit, then we should have been lost. But He would not be turned away. If He determines to save, He continues to pursue the rambling sheep until He finds it. He cannot, He must not, He will not cease from the work of seeking and of finding till He finds it. I wish tonight that the time were come with some here that it should be said, The Savior did pursue such-and-such a one until He found himfound him in the Tabernacle and ended all his wanderings therefound him standing in yonder gallery and ended all his wanderings at the foot of the Cross.

God grant that it may be so! But whether it is so with you or not, you can be sure of thisthat the Lord Jesus has in hundreds and thousands of cases pursued sinners with unflagging mercy, leaping to them over hills of sin and following them till He has found them. We are now His forever and ever, for He who has found us will never lose us. Blessed be His name!

Learn this lesson before I pass on. If ever you are seeking the conversion of any man, follow him until you find him. Do not be discouraged. Put up with a great many rebuffs and rebukesyou will have him yet. He is surest to succeed who cannot be put off from his aim. From some it will be necessary to receive a great deal that is most discouraging. Receive it and say nothing about itonly whisper to yourself, I might well have put the Great Shepherd off from caring for me and yet He was not so turned aside. If He persevered with me even to the death, I may well persevere as long as I live in seeking and finding a soul. I have heard of wives who have pleaded with God for their husbands twenty years. And by Gods Grace they have seen them converted.

There are instances in this place in which indefatigable love has followed up ungodly relatives until they have at last been saved by Sovereign Grace. Persevere with loving entreaties! Till you bury your unsaved ones, do not consider them dead. And do not bury them spiritually till they are dead really. Some are easily baffled. They have written the death warrant of their friend by ceasing to pray for him and yet that death warrant will never be written in the records of Heaven, for their friend will be brought to the Saviors feet.

Until He finds it. Now nail your colors to the mast. Until He finds it.

Go out, you under-shepherds for Christ. Wear this motto on your right hand. Until I find it. Live or die, or work or suffer, whether the time is short or long, or the way is smooth or rough, let each one of you be bound to seek a soul until He finds it. You will find it then, even as Christ found you. There I leave that first point.

II. And now we come to the secondAND WHEN HE HAS FOUND IT. When he has found it, what does he do then? Well, first, he takes fast hold. He lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. So when he has found it, the first thing is to get a tight grip of it. Look at himhe has got close up to the sheep. The poor thing is spent and yet may have strength enough to get away, therefore the shepherd takes good care that he shall not. He grasps his legs and holds him tight. That is what the Lord Jesus does when at last He gets a man broken down under a sense of sin, spent and worn out as to further resistance of Divine mercy.

Our Lord gets such a grip of the rebel that he will never get away. I remember when He laid hold of me. He has never lost His grasp even to this day. But, oh, it was a grasp! Nothing ever gripped my fickle mind like the hand of Christ. When the Divine hand, which fixed the foundations of the earth, had fixed itself on me, my wanderings were ended once and for all.

The next thing after the fast hold was the gracious lift. He lifted this poor sheep up and put it on his shoulders and there it was with all its weight, carried by powerful shoulders. That is what the Savior does for poor weary sinners. He carries the weight of their sin, No, the weight of themselves. He takes us just as we are, and instead of driving us back by His Law, He carries us home by His love. Instead of urging us to go home, He becomes the great burden-bearer of His redeemed and bears them on His shoulders. And now you have before you one of the loveliest of portraits that ever imagination can sketchthat great crowned Shepherd of the sheep, King of kings and Lord of lords, bearing on His shoulders, as a burden He delights to carrythe sheep that had gone astray.

Oh, I pray God that you may lie on those broad shoulders if you never have been so favored. The shoulders of Omnipotence bearing up our weaknessthe mighty Savior bearing us and all our sins and all our cares and our whole being upon the shoulders of His strengththis is a sight for angels!

And as He thus carries the weight, observe that the distance is removed. We read in the next verse, When He comes home, but there is nothing said about the road. For somehow our Master has the knack of being at home at once. The sinner may weary himself by twenty years of sin but in five minutes that may all be gone. It may have taken you fifty years to make yourself such a Hell-deserving sinner as you are, but it will not take Jesus fifty ticks of the clock to wash you and make you whiter than snow and get you back into the great Fathers house. Truth to tell, the Shepherds redeeming work is done already

*How dreadful was the hour,   
When God our wanderings laid,   
And did at once His vengeance pour   
Upon our Shepherds head!   
How glorious was the Grace,   
When Christ sustained the stroke!   
His life and blood the Shepherd pays,   
A ransom for the flock.*

By that redeeming process He brought us near to God. There is no weary journey back for shepherd or sheep. He grasps the sheep. He puts it on His shoulders and they are both back at the fold. But the particular point I want you to notice is when the Great Shepherd gets this burden on His back. We read, When He has found it He lays it upon His shoulderswith great anxiety? Look to see whether it is so. Nothing of the sort. But is it not, He lays it on His shoulders with great weariness? No. Look! Look! He lays it on His shoulders rejoicingrejoicing.

He does not remember all the weariness that He has had to suffer. He does not think of the folly of His sheep in having lost good pasture, in having involved itself in so much danger and in costing Him so much labor. Not a word is mentioned of it. He lays it on His shoulders rejoicing. He says to Himself, I am glad to carry this burdenhappy to carry My lost sheep home. And oh, I love to picture to myself at this moment the joy in the heart of the blessed Christ. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame. And now, whenever He gets a lost sheep to carry backHe rejoices.

His heart leaps within Him. All anxiety is gone. Fullness of delight is upon Him. He lays it upon His shoulders rejoicing. I wonder whether the sheep could see that the Shepherd rejoiced. I do not suppose that it could. But it could feel it. There are two ways, you know, of handling a sheep and the sheep very soon knows which expresses pleasure on its owners part. At any rate, I am sure that a dog knows well enough what your movements mean. If you speak angrily to a sheep and throw it upon your shoulder with indignation, that is one thing. But if you have not a word to say, except, Poor thing, I am glad I have found you, and you cast it on your shoulders rejoicing, why, sheep as it is, it knows the difference.

At any rate, I know that Christ has a way of saving usoh, so gently, so lovingly, so gleefully, that He makes us happy in being saved. There is a way of turning a penny into stone or into gold according to the way in which you give it to a poor man. You can fling it at him as if he were a dog and he will be about as grateful to you as a dog, or not as much. But there is a way in which you can say, I am sorry for your needs. This is all I can afford now. Take it and do what you can with it. Given with a brotherly look, it will be gratefully received and made the most of.

There is much in the manner, as well as in the matter of a gift. The mannerism of Christ is grandly graciousHe saves us rejoicing. It is a matter of thanksgiving to Him when He gets hold of His lost sheep and gets it on His shoulders. It makes me glad to think that it is so. We are not saved by a grudging Christ, who seems as if He were weary of us and must save us out of hand, to get rid of us. He does not act with us as some rude surgeon might do who says, I will attend to you directly but I have plenty else to do and you gratis patients are a trouble.

Nor does He roughly set the bone. No. Jesus comes and as with a ladys dainty hand He molds the dislocated joint. And when He sets it, there is bliss even about the method of the setting. We look into His face, and we

see that He puts His most tender sympathy into each movement. You know the different ways which workmen have. Some kind of work a man is soon sick of. The principle of division of labor is a very admirable one for the production of results upon a large scale. But it is a miserable business for the workman to have to do the same thing over and over again, all day long, as if he were an robot.

Get a man at work at a statuean artist whose whole soul is in his chisel, who knows that there is a bright spirit within that block of marble and who means to chip off all that hides the lovely image from his sight. See how he works! No man does a thing well who does it sorrowfully. The best work is done by the happy, joyful workman. And so it is with Christ. He does not save souls as of necessityas though He would rather do something else if He mightbut His very heart is in it, He rejoices to do it, and therefore He does it thoroughly and He communicates His joy to us in the doing of it.

Now, learn a lesson before I go away to the third point. When he has found it. Suppose that any of you should very soon meet with a poor troubled sinner, anxious to come to Christ. When you have found him, let me recommend you imitate the Masters exampleget a tight grip on him. Do not let him slip. Get a hold of him. And then, if he is in trouble, take all that trouble upon yourself. Try whether you cannot get him upon your shoulders. Imitate your Master in that way. Try to bear all his burden for him, as Christ bore yours. Conduct him to the Christ who is the true burden-bearer.

And all the while be very happy about it. I do not think we ought to go and talk to young converts in a dreadfully solemn tone, as though it would be something horrible to find a Savior. They will never come again, you may depend upon it. They will give you a wide berth. But just go and in a joyful spirit say, I am so glad to find you caring about your soul. The best thing that can happen to a soul-seeker is to meet with a troubled conscience. But, you say, I have not the time. Always have time, even in the middle of the night, to see a poor conscience-stricken sinner.

But perhaps you are very weary, or not well. If I were weary I should not be weary any longer when I came across a lost sheep. And if I were ill, I would get well on purpose to see after a sin-sick sinner. Talk in that way, with sweet and pleasant encouragement, for this is the way to help your brother sinner to the Savior. My time has gone but just a few words more on this last point.

III. WHEN HE COMES HOME. When he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me. For I have found my sheep which was lost. Some hurried observations. First, Heaven is a home. When he comes home. And the next verse says that it is Heaven. Heaven is a home. Do you not like to think of it under that aspect? It is the home of Jesus. And if it is the home of Jesus can any other home be equal to it? When he comes home.

Note, next, that lost ones are known in Heaven. I give you that thought more from the Greek than from the English hero. When he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me. For I have found my sheepthe lost one. That is how it should run. It is as if the friends knew that one had been lost and the loss had been deploredand the shepherd says, I have found my sheepyou know which onethe lost one. Up there they know which are Christs sheep, and which are lost. Heaven is nearer earth than some of us dream. How long does it take to get there?

*One gentle sigh the spirit breaks   
We scarce can say, Hes gone,   
Before the ransomed spirit takes   
Its mansion near the Throne.*

And there are more communications between earth and Heaven than some folks dream. For here it is clear that when the shepherd came home he said to them, I have found the sheep, the lost one. So they knew all about it. It is evident, again, that they all knew there that the shepherd had gone after the sheep, for he says, I have found my sheep which was lost. They all knew that he had gone on search, and therefore they could all understand his joy when he came back with the sheep.

I believe that they know in Heaven when Christ is seeking after anyone. It must be a great satisfaction to some up there who die with an unconverted son, or an unconverted child to know, after a little while, son or daughter is converted. I am persuaded they know it. They cannot help knowing it, because they are Christs friends and neighbors and, according to the parable, He tells them and He says to them, Rejoice with Me. And if He says, Rejoice with Me, why, of course, He tells them why.

You dont think that Jesus ever invited a spirit before the Throne to rejoice with Him, and received for an answer, I cannot do it, for I know no cause for joy. If I had been converted after my mothers death, I can fancy that when Jesus said to all of them, Rejoice with Me. For I have found My sheep, the lost one, my mother would say, My Lord, I can rejoice more than any of them, for that was my boy and he is saved at last. Your mother in Glory will be twice glorified tonight, John, if you give your heart to Christ. And I pray that you may. Your father, now before the Throne, will think that Paradise has grown more wonderful than ever if he hears it whispered down the golden streets that the wanderer has come home.

Notice, next, very briefly, that Jesus Christ loves other people to rejoice with Him, so that, when He finds a sinner, He has so much love in His heart that His joy runs over and He cries to others, Come, Friends, come Neighbors, come and help Me to be glad, for I have saved another soul. Let us catch the blessed infection. If you have just heard of somebody being saved, be glad about it. Though you do not know the person, yet be glad about it, because Jesus is glad.

Notice, next, that repentance is regarded as coming home. This sheep was not in Heaven. No, but as soon as it had been brought into the fold it is described as repenting. And Jesus and the angels begin to rejoice over it. If a man truly repents and Christ saves him, it is clear that he never will be lost. A certain old Proverb forbids us to count our chickens till they are hatched. And I do not think that angels would do so in the case of

immortal souls. If they believed that repenting sinners might afterwards be lost, they would not ring the marriage bells just yet, but they would wait a while to see how things worked out.

If they can yet perish there is not one convert that the angels dare rejoice over. For if any child of God might fall away and perish, why not everyone of us? If anyone falls from Divine Grace, I fear I shall. O my Brothers and Sisters, do you not fear the same for yourself? No, you say, I dont think so. Well, then, you are a proud fellow and you are the most likely one to desert your Lord. If ever a sheep of Christs shall fall away, I shall. I see more of my own tendencies to wander and more of my own temptations to offend than I do of yours. I would not have the angels rejoice over a man because he repents, if repentance is only a sign of human improvement and not a token of heavenly love.

I would say, Stop, angels. For this man may go back and perish after all, if, according to the modern Gospel, Christ loves today and hates tomorrowand a child of God may yet be a child of the devil. I do not believe a word of such doctrine. I believe that where the Lord begins the good work of Divine Grace He will carry it on and perfect it. And when the Lord has once given to a man to know Him, He will see that he is preserved in that knowledge forever. There is a text that clenches itI give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

Now, if they have eternal life, it cannot come to an end. For eternal life is eternal, evidently. And if they have eternal life, the Shepherd and His friends may justifiably sing when one single possessor of that eternal life is brought to life and salvation. In the penitent man a work is done that never can be undone. And he is put where he never can be lost. Yes

*I to the end shall endure,   
As sure as the earnest is given;   
More happy but not more secure.   
Are the glorified spirits in Heaven.*

Sing away, angels! There is something to sing about now! And we will join with you in blessing and praising the unchanging God forever and forever. Amen.

**Portion Of Scripture Read Before SermonLuke 15.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK421, 257, 378.   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1801 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

NO. 1801

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 28, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his   
shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes   
home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost! I say to you, that   
likewise there will be more joy in Heaven   
over one sinner who repents, than over   
ninety-nine just persons who   
need no repentance.   
Luke 15:4-7.**

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, while He was here below, was continually in the pursuit of lost souls. He was seeking lost men and women and it was for this reason that He went down among them, even among those who were most evidently lost, that He might find them. He took pains to put Himself where He could come into communication with them and He exhibited such kindness towards them that in crowds they drew near to hear Him. I dare say it was a strange looking assembly, a disreputable rabble, which made the Lord Jesus its center! I am not astonished that the Pharisee, when he looked upon the congregation, sneered and said, He collects around Him the pariahs of our community! The wretches who collect taxes for the foreigner of Gods free people, the fallen women of the towns and such-like riffraff make up His audiences and He, instead of repelling them, receives them, welcomes them, looks upon them as a class to whom He has a peculiar relationship. He even eats with them! Did He not go into the house of Zaccheus and the house of Levi and partake of the feasts which those low people made for Him?

We cannot tell you all the Pharisees thoughtit might not be edifying to attempt itbut they thought as badly of the Lord as they possibly could because of the company which surrounded Him. And so, He deigns in this parable to defend Himself, not that He cared much about what they might think, but that they might have no excuse for speaking so bitterly of Him. He tells them that He was seeking the lost and where should He be found but among those whom He was seeking? Should a physician shun the sick? Should a shepherd avoid the lost sheep? Was He not exactly in His right position when there drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him? Our Divine Lord defended Himself by what is called an argumentum ad homineman argument to the men themselvesfor He said, What man of you, having n hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not go after that which is lost, until he finds it?

No argument tells more powerfully upon men than one which comes close home to their own daily lifeand so the Savior put it. They were silenced, if they were not convinced. It was a peculiarly strong argument because in their case it was only a sheep that they would go afterbut in His case it was something infinitely more precious than all the flocks of sheep that ever fed on Sharon or Carmelit was the

soul of man which He sought to save! The argument had in it not only the point of peculiar adaptation, but a force at the back of it unusually powerful for driving it home upon every honest mind.

It may be opened out in this fashionIf you men would, each one of you, go after a lost sheep, and follow in its track until you found it, how much more may I go after lost souls, and follow them in all their wanderings until I can rescue them? The going after the sheep is a part of the parable which our Lord meant them to observethe shepherd pursues a route which he would never think of pursuing if it were only for his own pleasure. His way is not selected for his own ends, but for the sake of the stray sheep! He takes a track up hill and down dale, far into a desert, or into some dark wood simply because the sheep has gone that wayand he must follow it until he finds it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, as a matter of taste and pleasure, would never have been found among the publicans and sinners, nor among any of our guilty race, if He had consulted His own ease and comfort! He would have consorted only with pure and holy angels and the great Father abovebut He was not thinking of HimselfHis heart was set upon the lost ones and, therefore, He went where the lost sheep were, for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. The more steadily you look at this parable, the more clearly you will see that our Lords answer was complete. We need not, this morning, regard it exclusively as an answer to Pharisees, but we may look at it as an instruction to ourselvesfor it is quite as complete in that direction. May the good Spirit instruct us as we muse upon it.

I. In the first place, I call attention to this observationTHE ONE SUBJECT OF THOUGHT to the man who had lost his sheep. This sets forth to us the one thought of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, when He sees a man lost to holiness and happiness by wandering into sin. The shepherd, on looking over his little flock of 100, can only count ninetynine. He counts them again and he notices that a certain one has goneit may be a white-faced sheep with a black mark on its foot. He knows all about it, for, the Lord knows them that are His.

The shepherd has a photograph of the wanderer in his minds eye and now he thinks but little of the 99 who are feeding in the pastures of the wilderness. His mind is in a ferment about the one lost sheep! This one idea possesses hima sheep is lost! This agitates his mind more and morea sheep is lost. It masters his every faculty. He cannot eat; he cannot return to his home; he cannot rest while one sheep is lost. To a tender heart, a lost sheep is a painful subject of thought. It is a sheep and, therefore, utterly defenseless now that it has left its defender. If the wolf should spy it out, or the lion or the bear should come across its track, it would be torn in pieces in an instant! Thus the shepherd asks his heart the questionWhat will become of my sheep? Perhaps at this very moment a lion may be ready to spring upon it and, if so, it cannot help itself! A sheep is not prepared for fight or even for flightit has not the swiftness of its enemy. That makes its compassionate owner the more sad as he thinks againA sheep is lost. It is in great danger of a cruel death.

A sheep is, of all creatures, the most senseless. If we have lost a dog, it may find its way home again. Possibly a horse might return to its masters stable, but a sheep will wander on and on, lost in endless mazes. It is too foolish a thing to think of returning to the place of safety. A lost sheep is lost, indeed, in countries where lands lie unenclosed and the plains are boundless. That fact still seems to ring in the mans soulA sheep is lost, and it will not return, for it is a foolish thing. Where may it not have gone by this time? Weary and worn, it may be fainting. It may be far away from green pastures and be ready to perish with hunger among the bare rocks or upon the arid sand.

A sheep is shiftlessit knows nothing about providing for itself. The camel can scent water from afar and a vulture can spy its food from an enormous distance. But the sheep can find nothing for itself. Of all wretched creatures, a lost sheep is one of the worst! If anybody had stepped up to the shepherd, just then, and said, Good Sir, what ails you? You seem in great concern. He would have replied, And well I may be, for a sheep is lost. It is only one, Sir, and I see you have 99 left. Do you call it nothing to lose one? You are no shepherd, yourself, or you would not trifle so! Why, I seem to forget these 99 that are all safe, and my mind only remembers that one which is lost!

What is it which makes the Great Shepherd lay so much to His heart the loss of one of His flock? What is it that makes Him agitated as He reflects upon that suppositionif He loses one of them? I think it is, first, because of His property in it. The parable does not so much speak of a hired shepherd, but of a shepherd proprietor. What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them. Jesus, in another place, speaks of the hireling, whose own the sheep are not and, therefore, he flees when the wolf comes. It is the shepherd proprietor who lays down his life for the sheep. It is not a sheep, alone, and a lost sheep, but it is one of his own lost sheep that this man cares for. This parable is not written about lost humanity in the bulkit may be so used if you pleasebut in its first sense, it is written about Christs own sheepas also is the second parable concerning the womans own money and the third, not concerning any prodigal youthbut the fathers own son.

Jesus has His own sheep and some of them are lostyes, they were all, once, in the same condition, for, all we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way. The parable refers to the unconverted, whom Jesus has redeemed with His most precious bloodand whom He has undertaken to seek and to save. These are those other sheep whom He also must bring in. For thus says the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out 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.

The sheep of Christ are His long before they know itHis even when they wander! And when they are brought into the fold by the effectual working of His Grace, they become manifestly what they were in covenant from of old. The sheep are Christs, first, because He chose them from before the foundations of the worldYou have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you. His, next, because the Father gave them to Him. How He dwells upon that fact in His great prayer in John 17Yours they were, and You gave them to Me. Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am. We are the Lords own flock, furthermore, by His purchase of us. He saysI lay down My life for the sheep. It is nearly 19 centuries since He paid the ransom price and bought us to be His ownand we shall be His, for that purchase-money was not paid in vain! And so the Savior looks upon His hands and sees the marks of His purchase. He looks upon His side and sees the token of the effectual redemption of His own elect unto Himself by the pouring out of His own hearts blood before the living God!

This thought, therefore, presses upon Him, One of My sheep is lost. It is a wonderful supposition, that which is contained in this parableIf He loses one of them. What? Lose one whom He loved before the earth was? It may wander for a time, but He will not have it lost foreverthat He cannot bear! What? Lose one whom His Father gave Him to be His own? Lose one whom He has bought with His own life? He will not endure the thought! That wordIf He loses one of them sets His soul on fire! It shall not be! You know how much the Lord has valued each one of His chosen, laying down His life for His redemption. You know how dearly He loves every one of His peopleit is no new passion with Himneither can it grow old. He has loved His own and must love them to the end. From eternity that love has already endured and it must continue throughout the ages, for He changes not. Will He lose one of those so dearly loved? Never! Never! He has eternal possession of them by a covenant of salt, wherein the Father has given them to Him. This it is which in great measure stirs His soul so that He thinks of nothing but this factOne of My sheep is lost.

Secondly, He has get another reason for this all-absorbing thought, namely, His great compassion for His lost sheep. The wandering of a soul causes Jesus deep sorrow. He cannot bear the thought of its perishing. Such is the love and tenderness of His heart that He cannot bear that one of His own should be in jeopardy. He can take no rest as long as a soul for whom He shed His blood still abides under the dominion of Satan and under the power of sin. Therefore the Great Shepherd neither night nor day forgets His sheep. He must save His flock and He is straitened till it is accomplished. He has a deep sympathy with each stray heart. He knows the sorrow that sin brings, the deep pollution and the terrible wounding that comes of transgression, even at the timeand the sore heart and the broken spirit that will come of it before longand so the sympathetic Savior grieves over each lost sheep, for He knows the misery which lies in the fact of being lost.   
If you have ever been in a house with a mother and father, and daughters and sons, when a little child has been lost, you will never forget the agitation of each member of the household. See the father as he goes to the police station and calls at every likely house, for he must find his child or break his heart. See the deep oppression and bitter anguish of the mother. She is like one distracted till she has news of her darling. You now begin to understand what Jesus feels for one whom He loves, who is engraved on the palms of His hands, whom He looked upon in the glass of His foreknowledge when He was bleeding His life away upon the Cross. He has no rest in His spirit till His Beloved is found! He has compassion like a God and that transcends all the compassion of parents or of brothers the compassion of an infinite heart brimming over with an ocean of love! This one thought moves the pity of the LordIf He loses one of them.

Moreover, the man in the parable had a third relation to the sheep which made him possessed with the one thought of its being lostHe was a shepherd to it. It was his own sheep and he had, therefore, for that very reason, become its shepherd. He says to himself, If I lose one of them, my shepherd work will be ill-done. What dishonor it would be to a shepherd to lose one of his sheep! Either it must be for lack of power to keep it, or lack of will, or lack of watchfulnessbut none of these can appertain to the Chief Shepherd. Our Lord Jesus Christ will never have it said of Him that He has lost one of His people, for He glories in having preserved them all! While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. The devil shall never say that Jesus allowed one whom His Father gave Him to perish! His work of love cannot, in any degree, become a failure! His death in vain? No, not in jot or tittle!

I can imagine, if it were possible, that the Son of God should live in vainbut to die in vain? It shall never be! The purpose that He meant to achieve by His passion and death, He shall achieve, for He is the Eternal, the Infinite, the Omnipotentand who shall stay His hand, or baffle His design? He will not have it! If He loses one of them, says the passage imagine the consequence! What scorn would come from Satan! What derision would he pour upon the Shepherd! How Hell would ring with the news, He has lost one of them. Suppose it to be the feeblest? Then they would cry, He could keep the strong, who could keep themselves. Suppose it to be the strongestthen they would cry, He could not even keep one of the mightiest of them, but must needs let him perish! This is good argument, for Moses pleaded with God, What will the Egyptians say? It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones shall perish, neither is it for the Glory of Christ that one of His own sheep should be eternally lost!

You see the reason for the Lords heart being filled with one burning thought, for first, the sheep is His own. Next, He is full of compassion. And then, again, it is His office to shepherd the flock.

All this while the sheep is not thinking about the shepherd, or caring for him in the least degree! Some of you are not thinking at all about the Lord Jesus. You have no wish nor will to seek after Him! What folly! Oh, the pity of it, that the great heart above should be yearning over you, today, and should fail to rest because you are in peril, and you, who will be the greater loserfor you will lose your own soulare sporting with sin and making yourself merry with destruction! Ah, me, how far you have wandered! How hopeless would your case be if there were not an Almighty Shepherd to think about you!

II. Now we come to the second point and observe THE ONE OBJECT OF SEARCH. This sheep lies on the shepherds heart and he must, at once, set out to look for it. He leaves the 99 in the wilderness and goes after that which is lost until he finds it.

Observe here that it is a definite search. The shepherd goes after the sheep and after nothing else. And he has the one particular sheep in his minds eye. I should have imagined, from the way in which I have seen this text handled, that Christ, the Shepherd, went down into the wilderness to catch anybodys sheep He could find! Many were running about and He did not own any one of them more than another, but was content to pick up the one that He could first lay hold upon, or rather, that which first came running after Him. Not so is the case depicted in the parable! It is the shepherds own sheep that he is seeking and he goes distinctly after that one. It is his sheep which was losta well-known sheep! Well known, not only to himself, but even to his friends and neighborsfor he speaks to them as if it were perfectly understood which sheep it was that he went to save.

Jesus knows all about His redeemed and He definitely goes after suchand-such a soul! When I am preaching in the name of the Lord, I delight to think that I am sent to individuals with the message of mercy. I am not going to draw the bow at a venture at all! When the Divine hands are put on mine to draw the bow, the Lord takes such aim that no arrow misses its markinto the very center of the heart, the Word of God finds its wayfor Jesus goes not forth at a perhaps in His dealings with men! He subdues the will and conquers the heart, making His people willing in the day of His power. He calls individuals and they come! He says, Mary, and the response is, Rabboni. I say the man in the parable sought out a distinct individual and rested not till he found it, and so does the Lord Jesus, in the movements of His love, go forth at no uncertaintyHe does not grope about to catch whom He may, as if He played at Blindmans Bluff with salvation, but He seeks and saves the one out of His own sheep which He has His eye upon in its wanderings. Jesus knows what He means to do and He will perform it to the glory of the Father.

Note that this is an all-absorbing search. He is thinking of nothing but his own lost sheep. The 99 are left in safety, but they are left. When we read that he leaves them in the wilderness, we are apt to think of some barren place, but that is not intended. It simply means the open pasture, the steppe, the prairiehe leaves them well provided for; leaves them because he can leave them. For the time being he is carried away with the one thought that he must seek and save the lost one and, therefore, he leaves the 99 in their pasture. Shepherd, the way is very rocky! He does not seem to know what the way is, his heart is with his lost sheep. Shepherd, it is a heavy climb up yonder mountainside. He does not note his toilhis excitement lends him the feet of the wild goat! He stands securely where, at other times, his feet would slip. He looks around for his sheep and seems to see neither crag nor chasm. Shepherd, it is a terrible path by which you must descend into yonder gloomy valley. It is not terrible to himhis only terror is lest his sheep should perish! He is taken up with that one fear and nothing else. He leaps into danger and escapes it by the one strong impulse which bears him on. It is grand to think of the Lord Jesus Christ with His heart set immovably upon the rescue of a soul which at this moment is lost to Him.

It is an active search, too, for observe, he goes after that which is lost until he find it, and he does this with a personal search. He does not say to one of his underlings, Here, hasten after that sheep which was lost, and bring it home. No, he follows it, himself. And if ever there is a soul brought from sin to Grace, it is not by us poor ministers working alone, but it is by the Master, Himself, who goes after His own sheep! It is glorious to think of Him still personally tracking sinners, who, though they fly from Him with a desperateness of folly, yet are still pursued by Him pursued by the Son of God, by the Eternal Lover of menpursued by Him until He finds them!

And notice the perseverance of the searchuntil he finds it. He does not stop till He has done the deed. You and I ought to seek after a soul, how long? Why, until we find itfor such is the model set before us by the Master! The parable says nothing about His not finding itno hint of failure is givenwe dream not that there may be a sheep belonging to Him which He will never find! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there are a great many whom you and I would never find! But when Jesus is after His own lost sheep, depend upon it, such is His skill, so clearly does He see and so effectually does He intervene, that He will surely bring them in! A defeated Christ I cannot conceive of! It is a personal search, a persevering search and a successful search, until He finds it. Let us praise and bless His name for this.

Observe that when the shepherd does find it, there is a little touch in the parable not often noticedhe does not appear to put it back into the fold, again. I mean, we do not find it so written, as a fact to be noted. I suppose he did so, ultimately, but for the time being he keeps it with himself rather than with its fellows. The next scene is the shepherd at home, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. It looks as if Jesus did not save a soul so much to the Church as to Himselfand though the saved are in the flock, the greatest joy of all is that the sheep is with the Shepherd! This shows you how thoroughly Christ lays Himself out that He may save His people. There is nothing in Christ that does not tend towards the salvation of His redeemed. There are no pull-backs with Him, no half-consecrated influences which make Him linger!

In the pursuit of certain objects we lay out a portion of our faculties, but Jesus lays out all His powers upon the seeking and saving of souls. The whole Christ seeks after each sinner! And when the Lord finds it, He gives Himself to that one soul as if He had but that one soul to bless! How my heart admires the concentration of all the Godhead and Manhood of Christ in His search after each sheep of His flock.

III. Now we must pass on very briefly to notice a third point. We have had one subject of thought and one object of searchnow we have ONE BURDEN OF LOVE. When the seeking is ended, then the saving appears When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. Splendid action is this! How beautifully the parable sets forth the whole of salvation! Some of the old writers delight to put it thusIn His Incarnation He came after the lost sheep. In His life He continued to seek it. In His death He laid it upon His shoulders. In His resurrection He bore it on its way and in His ascension He brought it home rejoicing.

Our Lords career is a course of soul-winning, a life laid out for His people and in it you may trace the whole process of salvation. But now, look, the shepherd finds the sheep and he lays it on his shoulders! It is

an uplifting action, raising the fallen one from the earth where he has strayed. It is as though he took the sheep, just as it was, without a word of rebuke, without delay or hesitancyand lifted it out of the slough or the briers into a place of safety. Do you not remember when the Lord lifted you up from the horrible pit? When He sent from above, delivered you and became your strength? I shall never forget that day! What a wonderful lift it was for me when the Great Shepherd lifted me into newness of life! The Lord said of Israel, I bore you on eagles wings, but it is a dearer emblem, still, to be borne upon the shoulders of the Incarnate Word!

This laying on the shoulders was an appropriating act. He seemed to say, You are my sheep and, therefore, I lay you on my shoulders. He did not make his claim in so many words, but by a rapid action he declared itfor a man does not bear away a sheep to which he has no rightthis was not a sheep-stealer, but a shepherd-proprietor! He holds fast the sheep by all four of its legs, so that it cannot stir, and then he lays it on his own shoulders, for it is all his own, now. He seems to say, I am a long way from home and I am in a weary desert; but I have found my sheep and these hands shall hold it. Here are our Lords own words, I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.

Hands of such might as those of Jesus will hold fast the found one! Shoulders of such power as those of Jesus will safely bear the found one home! It is all well with that sheep, for it is positively and experimentally the Good Shepherds own, just as it always had been His in the eternal purpose of the Father. Do you remember when Jesus said unto you, You are Mine? Then I know you also appropriated Him and began to sing

*So I my best Beloveds, am,   
And He is mine.*

More condescending, still, is another view of this actit was a deed of service to the sheep. The sheep is uppermost, the weight of the sheep is upon the shepherd. The sheep rides, the shepherd is the burden-bearer. The sheep rests, the shepherd labors. I am among you as He that serves, said our Lord long ago. Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. On that Cross He bore the burden of our sin, and what is more, the burden of our very selves! Blessed be His name, The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and He has laid us on Him, too, and He bears us. Remember that choice ScriptureIn His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old. Soul-melting thought! The Son of God became subservient to the sons of man! The Maker of Heaven and earth bowed His shoulders to bear the weight of sinners!

It was a rest-giving act, very likely necessary to the sheep which could go no further and was faint and weary. It was a full rest to the poor creature if it could have understood it, to feel itself upon its shepherds shoulders, irresistibly carried back to safety. What a rest it is to you and to me to know that we are borne along by the eternal power and Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ! The Beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, and he shall dwell between His shoulders. The Christ bears us up today. We have no need of strengthour weakness is no impediment, for He bears us. Has not the Lord said, I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you? We shall not even stumble, much less fall to ruinthe Shepherds feet shall traverse all the road in safety. No portion of the way back should cause us fear, for He is able to bear us even to His home above. What a sweet word is that in DeuteronomyThe Lord your God bore you, as a man does bear his son, in all the ways that you went, until you came into this place. Blessed rest of faith, to give yourself up entirely to those hands and shoulders to keep and carry you even to the end!

Let us bless and praise the Lord! The shepherd is consecrated to his burdenhe bears nothing on his shoulders but his sheepand the Lord Jesus seems to bear no burden but that of His people. He lays out His Omnipotence to save His chosen. Having redeemed them, first, with His own blood, He redeems them, still, with all His power. And they shall be Mine, says the Lord, in that day when I make up My jewels. Oh the glorious Grace of our unfailing Savior, who consecrates Himself to our salvation and concentrates upon that object all that He has and is!

IV. We close by noticing one more matter, which isTHE ONE SOURCE OF JOY. This man who had lost his sheep is filled with joy and his sheep is the sole source of it. His sheep has so taken up all his thoughts and so commanded all his faculties that, as he found all his cares centered upon it, so he now finds all his joy flowing from it. I invite you to notice the first mention of joy we get hereWhen he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. That is a great load for you, shepherd! Joyfully he answers, I am glad to have it on my shoulders. The mother does not say, when she has found her lost child, this is a heavy load. No, she presses it to her bosom. She does not mind how heavy it isit is a dear burden to her. She is rejoiced to bear it once again. He lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

Remember that textWho for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame? A great sorrow was on Christ when our load was laid on Himbut a greater joy flashed into His mind when He thought that we were thus recovered from our lost estate! He said to Himself, I have taken them up upon My shoulders and none can hurt them, now, neither can they wander to destruction. I am bearing their sin and they shall never come into condemnation. The penalty of their guilt has been laid on Me that it may never be laid on them. I am an effectual and efficient Substitute for them. I am bearing, that they may never bear, my Fathers righteous ire. His love to them made it a joy to feel every lash of the scourge of justice! His love to them made it a delight that the nails should pierce His hands and feetand that His heart should be broken with the absence of His Father, God.

Even, Eloi, Eloi, lame Sabachthani, when the deeps of its woe have been sounded, will be found to have pearls of joy in its caverns! No shout of triumph can equal that cry of grief because our Lord rejoiced to bear even the forsaking of His Father for the sin of His chosen whom He had loved from before the foundation of the world! Oh, you cannot understand it except in a very feeble measure! Let us try to find an earthly miniature likeness. A son is taken ill far away from home. He is laid sick with a fever and a telegram is sent home. His mother says she must go and nurse him. She is wretched till she can set out upon the journey. It is a dreary place where her boy lies, but for the moment it is the dearest spot on earth to her! She joys to leave the comforts of her home to tarry among strangers for the love of her boy! She feels an intense joy in sacrificing herselfshe refuses to retire from his bedsideshe will not leave her charge.

She watches day and night and only from utter exhaustion does she fall asleep. You could not have kept her in Englandshe would have been too wretched. It was a great, deep, solemn pleasure for her to be where she could minister to her own beloved son. Soul, remember you have given Jesus great joy in His saving you! He was forever with the Father, eternally happy, infinitely glorious, as God over alland yet He came here out of boundless love, took upon Himself our nature and suffered in our place to bring us back to holiness and God! He lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. That day the shepherd knew but one joy. He had found his sheep and the very pressure of it upon his shoulders made his heart light, for he knew by that sign that the object of his care was safe beyond all question.

Now he goes home with it and this joy of his was then so great that it filled his soul to overflowing! The parable speaks nothing as to his joy in getting home, again, nor a word concerning the joy of being saluted by his friends and neighbors. No, the joy of having found his sheep eclipsed all other gladness of heart and dimmed the light of home and friendship. He turns round to friends and neighbors and entreats them to help him to bear the weight of his happiness. He cries, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. One sinner had repented and all Heaven must make holiday concerning it! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there is enough joy in the heart of Christ over His saved ones to flood all Heaven with delight! The streets of Paradise run knee-deep with the heavenly waters of the Saviors joy. They flow out of the very soul of Christand angels and glorified spirits bathe in the mighty stream!

Let us do the same1 We are friends if we are not neighbors. He calls us, today, to come and bring our hearts, like empty vessels, that He may fill them with His own joy, that our joy may be full! Those of us who are saved must enter into the joy of our Lord. When I was trying to think over this text, I rejoiced with my Lord in the bringing in of each one of His sheep, for each one makes a Heaven full of joy. But oh, to see all the redeemed brought in! Jesus would have no joy if He should lose oneit would seem to spoil it all. If the purpose of mercy were frustrated in any one instance, it were a dreary defeat of the great Savior. But His purpose shall be carried out in every instance. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. He shall not fail nor be discouraged. He shall carry out the will of the Father. He shall have the full reward of His passion! Let us joy and rejoice with Him this morning!

But the text tells us there was more joy over that one lost sheep than over the 99 that went not astray. Who are these just persons that need no repentance? Well, you could never explain a parable so as to make it run on four legs if it were only meant to go on two. There may not be such persons at all and yet the parable may be strictly accurate. If all of us had been such persons and had never needed repentance, we would not have given as much joy to the heart of Christ as one sinner does when he repents. But suppose it to mean that you and I who have long ago repentedwho have, in a certain sense, now no need of repentance because we are justified men and womenwe do not give so much joy to the heart of God, for the time being, as a sinner does when he first returns unto God? It is

not that it is a good thing to go astray, or a bad thing to be kept from it.

You understand how that isthere are seven children in a family and six of them are all well. But one dear child is taken seriously ill and is brought near to the gates of death. It has recovered, its life is sparedand do you wonder that, for the time being, it gives more joy to the household than all the healthy ones? There is a great deal more expressed delight about it than over all those that have not been ill at all! This does not show it is a good thing to be ill! No, nothing of the kindwe are only speaking of the joy which comes of recovery from sickness. Take another case. You have a son who has been long away in a far country and another son at home. You love them both equally, but when the absent son comes home, he is, for a season, most upon your thoughts. Is it not natural that it should be so? Those at home give us joy constantly from day to day, but when the stream of joy has been dammed back by his absence, it pours down in a flood upon his return. Then we have high days and holy days! And bonfire nights!

There are special circumstances about repentance and conversion which produce joy over a restored wanderer. There was a preceding sorrow and this sets off the joy by contrast. The shepherd was so touched with compassion for the lost sheep that now his sorrow is inevitably turned into joy. He suffered a dreadful suspense and that is a killing thingit is like an acid eating into the soul. That suspense which makes one ask, Where is the sheep? Where can it be? is a piercing of the heart. All those weary hours of searching, seeking and following are painfully wearing to the heart. You feel as if you would almost sooner know that you never would find it than be in that doubtful state of mind. That suspense, when it is ended, naturally brings with it a sweet liberty of joy.

Moreover, you know that the joy over penitents is so unselfish that you who have been kept by the Grace of God for many years do not grieve that there should be more joy over a repenting sinner than over you. No, you say to yourself, There is good cause. I am, myself, among those who are glad. You remember that good men made great rejoicing over you when you first came to Jesusand you heartily unite with them in welcoming newcomers. You will not act the elder brother and say, I will not share the joy of my father. Not a bit of it! But you will enter heartily into the music and dancingand count it your Heaven to see souls saved from Hell! I feel a sudden flush and flood of delight when I meet with a poor creature who once lay at Hells dark door, but is now brought to the gate of Heaven. Do not you?

The one thing I want to leave with you is how our gracious Lord seems to give Himself up to His own redeemed. How entirely and perfectly every thought of His heart, every action of His power, goes toward the needy, guilty, lost soul! He spends His all to bring back His banished! Poor souls who believe in Him have His whole strength engaged on their behalf. Blessed be His name! Now let all our hearts go forth in love towards Him who gave all His heart to work our redemption. Let us love Him! We cannot love Him as He loved us as to measure, but let us do so in like manner. Let us love Him with all our heart and soul! Let us feel as if we saw nothing, knew nothing, loved nothing but Jesus crucified! As we filled all His heart, let Him fill all our hearts!

Oh, poor Sinner, here today, will you not yield to the Good Shepherd? Will you not stand still as He draws near? Will you not submit to His mighty Grace? Know that your rescue from sin and death must be of Him and of Him, alone. Breathe a prayer to HimCome, Lord, I wait for Your salvation! Save me, for I trust in You. If you do thus pray, you have the mark upon you of Christs sheep, for He says, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. Come to Him, for He comes to you! Look to Him for He looks to you!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJohn 15:1-24.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK387, 403, 388.  
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THE LOST SILVER PIECE   
NO. 970

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 15, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels   
of God over one sinner that repents.   
Luke 15:8-10.**

This chapter is full of Grace and Truth. Its three consecutive parables have been thought to be merely a repetition of the same doctrine under different metaphors, and if that were so the Truth of God which it teaches is so important that it could not be rehearsed too often in our hearing. Moreover, it is one which we are apt to forget, and it is well to have it again and again impressed upon our minds. The Truth here taught is just thisthat Mercy stretches forth her hand to misery, that Grace receives men as sinners, that it deals with demerit, unworthiness, and worthlessness. That those who think themselves righteous are not the objects of Divine compassion, but the unrighteous, the guilty, and the undeserving, are the proper subjects for the infinite mercy of God.

In a word, that salvation is not of merit but of Divine Grace. This Truth, I say, is most important, for it encourages penitents to return to their Father. But it is very apt to be forgottenfor even those who are saved by Grace too often fall into the spirit of the elder brother, and speak as if, after all, their salvation depended on the works of the Law. But, my dear Friends, the three parables recorded in this chapter are not repetitions. They all declare the same main Truth, but each one reveals a different phase of it.

The three parables are three sides of a vast pyramid of Gospel doctrine, with a distinct inscription upon each. Not only in the similitude, but also in the teaching covered by the similitude, there is variety, progress, enlargement, discrimination. We have only need to read attentively to discover that in this trinity of parables, we have at once unity of essential Truth and distinctness of description. Each one of the parables is necessary to the other, and when combined they present us with a far more complete exposition of their doctrine than could have been conveyed by any one of them.

Note for a moment the first of the three which brings before us a shepherd seeking a lost sheep. To whom does this refer? Who is the shepherd of Israel? Who brings again that which has gone astray? Do we not clearly discern the ever-glorious and blessed Chief, Shepherd of the sheep, who lays down His life that He may save them? Beyond a question, we see in the first parable the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second parable is most fitly placed where it is. It, I doubt not, represents the work of the Holy Spirit working through the Church for the lost but precious souls of men. The Church is that woman who sweeps her house to find the lost piece of money, and in her the Spirit works His purposes of love. How the work of the Holy Spirit follows the work of Christ! As here we first see the shepherd seeking the lost sheep, and then read of the woman seeking the lost piece of money, so the great Shepherd redeems, and then the Holy Spirit restores the soul.

You will perceive that each parable is thoroughly understood in its minute details when so interpreted. The shepherd seeks a sheep which has willfully gone astray, and so far the element of sin is present. The lost piece of money does not bring up that idea, nor was it necessary that it should, since the parable does not deal with the pardon of sin as the first does. The sheep, on the other hand, though stupid is not altogether senseless and dead, but the piece of money is altogether unconscious and powerless, and therefore all the fitter emblem of man as the Holy Spirit begins to deal with him, dead in trespasses and sins.

The third parable evidently represents the Divine Father in His abundant love receiving the lost child who comes back to Him. The third parable would be likely to be misunderstood without the first and the second. We have sometimes heard it saidhere is the prodigal received as soon as he comes back, no mention being made of a Savior who seeks and saves him. Is it possible to teach all Truths in one single parable? Does not the first one speak of the shepherd seeking the lost sheep? Why need repeat what had been said before?

It has also been said that the prodigal returned of his own free will, for there is no hint of the operation of a superior power upon his heart, it seems as if he himself spontaneously says, I will arise, and go unto my Father. The answer is, that the Holy Spirits work had been clearly described in the second parable, and needed not to be introduced again. If you put the three pictures in a line, they represent the whole compass of salvation, but each one apart sets forth the work in reference to one or other of the Divine Persons of the blessed Trinity.

The shepherd, with much pain and self-sacrifice, seeks the reckless, wandering sheep. The woman diligently searches for the insensible but lost piece of money. The father receives the returning prodigal. What God has joined together, let no man put asunder. The three life-sketches are oneand one Truth is taught in the whole three. yet each one is distinct from the other, and by itself instructive.

May we be taught of God while we try to discover the mind of the Spirit in this parable, which, as we believe, represents the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the Church. The Church is evermore represented as a woman, either the chaste bride of Christ, or the shameless courtesan of Babylon. As for good a woman sweeps the house, so for evil a woman takes the leaven and hides it in the meal till all is leavened.

Towards Christ a wife and towards men a mother, the Church is most fitly set forth as a woman. A woman with a house under her control is the full idea of the texther husband away and herself in charge of the treasurejust such is the condition of the Church since the departure of the Lord Jesus to the Father. To bring each part of the text under inspection we shall notice man in three conditionslost, sought, found.

I. First, the parable treats of man, the object of Divine Mercy, as lost. Notice, first, the treasure was lost in the dust. The woman had lost her piece of silver, and in order to find it she had to sweep for it, which proves that it had fallen into a dusty placefallen to the earthwhere it might be hidden and concealed amid rubbish and dirt. Every man of Adam born is as a piece of silver lostfallen, dishonoredand some are buried amid foulness and dust. If we should drop many pieces of money they would fall into different positions. One of them might fall into actual mire, and be lost there. Another might fall upon a carpet, or a clean, well-polished floor, and be lost there.

If you have lost your money, it is equally lost into whatever place it may have fallen. So all men are alike lost, but they have not all fallen into the like condition of apparent defilement. One man from the surroundings of his childhood and the influences of education, has never indulged in the coarser and more brutalizing vices. He has never been a blasphemer, perhaps never openly even a Sabbath-breaker, yet he may be lost for all that. Another, on the other hand, has fallen into great excess of riot. He is familiar with wantonness and chambering, and all manner of evil.

He is lost, he is lost with an emphasisbut the more decorous sinner is lost, also. There may be some here this morning (and we wish always to apply the Truth as we go on), who are lost in the very worst of corruptionI would to God that they would take hope and learn from the parable before us, that the Church of God and the Spirit of God are seeking after them, and they may be among the found ones yet.

Since, on the other hand, there are many here who have not dropped into such unclean places, I would affectionately remind them that they are, nevertheless lost, and they need as much to be sought for by the Spirit of God as if they were among the vilest of the vile. To save the moral needs Divine Grace as certainly as to save the immoral. If you are lost, my dear Hearer, it will be small avail to you that you perished respectably, and were accursed in decent companyif you lack but one thing, yet if the deficiency be fatalit will be but a poor consolation that you had only one lack.

If one leak sent the vessel to the bottom, it was no comfort to the crew that their ship only leaked in one place. One disease may kill a man. He may be sound everywhere else, but it will be a sorry comfort to him to know that he might have lived long had but that one organ been sound. If, dear Hearer, you should have no sin whatever save only an evil heart of unbeliefif all your external life should be lovely and amiableyet if that one fatal sin is in you, you can draw small consolation from all else that is good about you. You are lost by nature, and you must be found by Grace, whoever you may be.

In this parable, that which was lost was altogether ignorant of its being lost. The silver coin was not a living thing, and therefore had no consciousness of its being lost or sought after. The piece of money lost was quite as content to be on the floor or in the dust, as it was to be in the purse of its owner among its like. It knew nothing about its being lost, and could not know. And it is just so with the sinner who is spiritually dead in sin. He is unconscious of his state, nor can we make him understand the danger and terror of his condition. When he feels that he is lost, there is already some work of Divine Grace in him. When the sinner knows that he is lost, he is no longer content with his condition, but begins to cry out

for mercy, which is evidence that the finding work has already began.

The unconverted sinner will confess that he is lost because he knows the statement to be Scriptural, and therefore out of compliment to Gods Word he admits it to be true. But he has no idea of what is meant by it, else would he either deny it with proud indignation, or he would bestir himself to pray that he might be restored to the place from which he has fallen, and be numbered with Christs precious property.

O my Hearers, this it is that makes the Spirit of God so necessary in all our preaching, and every other soul-saving exercisebecause we have to deal with insensible souls. The man who puts the fire escape against the window of a burning house may readily enough rescue those who are aware of their dangerthose who rush to the front for his helpor at least are submissive to him in his work of delivering them. But if a man were insaneif he played with the flames. If he were idiotic and thought that some grand illumination were going on, and knew nothing of the danger but was only glamored by the glarethen would it be hard work for the rescuer.

Even thus it is with sinners. They know not, though they profess to know, that sin is Hell. That to be an alien from God is to be condemned already. To live in sin is to be dead while you live. The insensibility of the piece of money fairly pictures the utter indifference of souls unquickened by Divine Grace.

The silver piece was lost but not forgotten. The woman knew that she had ten pieces of silver originally. She counted them over carefully, for they were all her little storeand she found only nine. But she well remembered that one more was hers and ought to be in her hand. This is our hope for the Lords lost ones. They are lost but not forgotten! The heart of the Savior remembers them, and prays for them.

O Soul, I trust you are one whom Jesus calls His own! If so, He remembers the pangs which He endured in redeeming you, and He remembers the Fathers love which was reflected on you from old eternity, when the Father gave you into the hands of His Beloved Son. You are not forgotten of the Holy Spirit who seeks you for the Savior. This is the ministers hope, that there is a people whom the Lord remembers and whom He never will forget, though they forget Him. Strangers to Him, far-off, ignorant, callous, careless, deadyet the everlasting heart in Heaven throbs towards them with love.

And the mind of the Spirit, working on earth, is directed to them. These, who were numbered and reckoned up of old, are still in the inventory of the Divine memory. And though lost they are earnestly remembered still. In some sense this is true of every sinner here. You are lost, but that you are remembered is evident, for I am sent today to preach the Gospel of Jesus to you. God has thoughts of love concerning you, and bids you turn unto Him and live. Have respect, I pray you, to the Word of His salvation.

Next, the piece of silver was lost but still claimed. Observe that the woman called the money, my piece which was lost. When she lost its possession she did not lose her right to it. It did not become somebody elses when it slipped out of her hand and fell upon the floor. Those for whom Christ has died, whom He has peculiarly redeemed, are not Satans even when they are dead in sin. They may come under the devils usurped dominion, but the monster shall be chased from his throne.

Christ has received them of old of the Father, and He has bought them with His precious blood. And He will have them. He will chase away the intruder and claim His own. Thus says the Lord, Your Covenant with death is disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand. You have sold yourselves for nothingand you shall be redeemed without money. Jesus shall have His own, and none shall pluck them from His hand. He will defend His claim against all comers.

Further, observe that the lost piece of money was not only remembered and claimed, but it was also valued. In these three parables the value of the lost article steadily rises. This is not very clear at first sight because it may be said that a sheep is of more value than a piece of money. But notice that the shepherd only lost one sheep out of a hundred, but the woman lost one piece out of ten, and the father one son out of two. Now, it is not the value of the thing in itself which is here set forth, for the soul of a man, as absolutely valued in comparison with the Infinite God, is of small esteem. But because of His love it is of great value to Him.

The one piece of money to the woman was a tenth part of all she had, and it was very valuable in her esteem. To the Lord of love a lost soul is very preciousit is not because of its intrinsic value, but it has a relative value which God sets at a high rate. The Holy Spirit values souls, and therefore the Church prizes them, too. The Church sometimes says to herself, We have but few conversions, few members. Many are called, but few chosen. She counts over her few converts, her few members, and one soul is to her all the more precious because of the few there are who in these times are in the treasury of Christ, stamped with the image of the great Being, and made of the precious genuine silver of Gods own Grace.

O dear Friend, you think yourself of small value, you who are conscious that you have sinned! But the Church does not think you of small value and the Holy Spirit does not despise you. He sets a high price upon you, and so do His people. We value your souls, we only wish we knew how to save them. We would spare no expense or pains if we might but be the means of finding you, and bringing you once more into the great Owners hands.

The piece of money was lost, but it was not lost hopelessly. The woman had hopes of recovering it, and therefore she did not despair, but set to work at once. It is a dreadful thing to think of those souls which are lost hopelessly. Their state reminds me of a paragraph I have cut from this weeks newspaperThe fishing smack Veto, of Grimshy, S. Cousins, master, arrived in port from the Dogger Bank on Saturday night.

The master reports that on the previous Wednesday, when about two hundred miles from Spurn, he sighted to the leeward what at first appeared to be a small schooner in distress, but on bearing down to her found her to be a full-sized lifeboat, upwards of twenty feet long, and full of water up to her corks. There was no name on the boat, which had evidently belonged to some large ship or steamer. It was painted white both inside and out, with a brown streak round the rim.

When alongside, on closer examination, three dead sailors were perceived lying aft, huddled together, and a fourth athwart in the bow, with his head hanging over the rowlocks. They seemed from their dress and general appearance to be foreigners, but the bodies had been frightfully

washed about, and were in a state of decomposition, and had evidently been dead some weeks. The water-logged waft drifted on with its ghastly cargo, and the horrible sight so shocked the crew of the Veto that afterwards they were almost too unnerved to attend to their trawling, and the smack, in consequence, returned to port with a comparatively small catch, and sooner than expected.

Do you wonder at the men sickening in the presence of this mystery of the sea? I shudder as I think I see that morgue-like boat floating on and onMercy need not follow itshe can confer no benefit. Love need not seek it, no deed of hers can save. My soul sees, as in a vision, souls hopelessly lost, drifting on the waves of eternity, beyond all hope or help. Alas, alas, millions of our race are now in that condition! Upon them has passed the second death, and powerless are we all to save them. Towards them even the Gospel has no aspect of hope.

Our joy is that we have to deal today with lost souls who are not yet hopelessly lost. They are dead in sin, but there is a quickening power which can make them live. O mariner of the sea of life, fisher of men upon this stormy sea, those castaways whom you meet with are accessible to your efforts of compassionthey can be rescued from the pitiless deeps! Your mission is not a hopeless one! I rejoice over the ungodly man here today that he is not in torment, not in Hell. He is not among those whose worm dies not and whose fire is not quenched.

I congratulate the Christian Church, too, that her piece of money has not fallen where she cannot find it. I rejoice that the fallen around us are not past hope. Yes, though they dwell in the worst dens of London, though they are thieves and harlots, they are not beyond the reach of mercy. Up, O Church of God, while possibilities of mercy remain! Gird up your loins, be soul-winners, and resolve by the Grace of God that every hour of hope shall be well employed by you.

One other point is worthy of notice. The piece of silver was lost, but it was lost in the house, and the woman knew it to be so. If she had lost it in the streets, the probabilities are she would not have looked for it again, for other hands might have closed over it. If she had lost it in a river, or dropped it in the sea, she might very fairly have concluded that it was gone foreverbut evidently she was sure that she had lost it in the house.

Is it not a consolation to know that those here, who are lost, are still in the house? They are still under the means of Grace, within the sphere of the Churchs operations, within the habitation of which she is the mistress, and where the Holy Spirit works. What thankfulness there ought to be in your minds that you are not lost as heathens, nor lost amid Roman Catholic or Mohammedan superstition, but lost where the Gospel is faithfully and plainly preached to youwhere you are lovingly told that whoever believes in Christ Jesus is not condemned. Lost, but lost where the Churchs business is to look after you! Where it is the Spirits work to seek and to find you! This is the condition of the lost soul, depicted as a lost piece of silver.

II. Secondly, we shall notice the soul under another conditionwe shall view it as sought. By whom was the piece of silver sought? It was sought by its owner, personally. Notice she who lost the money lit a candle and swept the house, and sought diligently till she found it. So, Brethren, I have said that the woman represents the Holy Spirit, or rather the Church in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Now there will never be a soul found till the Holy Spirit seeks after it. He is the great soul-finder. The heart will continue in the dark until He comes with His illuminating power.

He is the Owner, He possesses it and He alone can effectually seek after it. The God to whom the soul belongs must seek the soul. But He does it by His Church, for souls belong to the Church, too. They are sons and daughters of the chosen mother, they are her citizens and treasures. For this reason the Church must personally seek after souls. She cannot delegate her work to anybody. The woman did not pay a servant to sweep the house, but she swept it herself. Her eyes were much better than a servants eyes, for the servants eyes would only look after somebody elses money, and perhaps would not see it.

But the mistress would look after her own money, and she would be certain to light upon it if it were anywhere within sight. When the Church of God solemnly feels, It is our work to look after sinners, we must not delegate it even to the minister, or to the City-missionary, or the Bible woman, but the Church as a Church must look after the souls of sinners, then I believe souls will be found and saved. When the Church recognizes that these lost souls belong to her, she will be likely to find them. It will be a happy day when every Church of God is actively at work for the salvation of sinners!

It has been the curse of Christendom that she has ventured to delegate her sacred duties to men called priests, or that she has set apart certain persons to be called the religious who are to do works of mercy and charity and of evangelization. We are, every one of us who are Christs, bound to do our own share. No, we should deem it a privilege of which we will not be deprivedpersonally to serve Godpersonally to sweep the house and search after the lost spiritual treasures. The Church herself, in the power of the indwelling Spirit of God, must seek lost souls.

Note that this seeking became a matter of chief concern with the woman. I do not know what other business she had to do, but I do know that she put it all by to find the piece of money. There was the corn to be ground for the morning meal. Perhaps that was done. At any rate, if not so, she left it unprepared. There was a garment to be mended, or water to be drawn, or the fire to be kindled, or the friends and neighbors to be conversed withnever mind, the mistress forgets everything elseshe has lost her piece of money, and she must find it at once.

So with the Church of God. Her chief concern should be to seek the perishing sons of men. To bring souls to know Jesus, and to be saved in Him with a great salvation should be the Churchs great longing and concern. She has other things to do. She has her own edification to consider. She has other matters to be attended to in their placebut this firstthis evermore and always first.

The woman evidently said, The money is lost, I must find that first. The loss of her piece of silver was so serious a matter that if she sat down to her mending, her hands would miss their nimbleness. Or if any other household work demanded her attention, it would be an irksome task to her, for she was thinking of that coin. If her friend came and talked with her, she would say to herself, I wish she were gone, for I want to be looking after my lost money. I wish the Church of God had such an engrossing love for poor sinners that she would feel everything to be an impertinence which hindered her from soul-saving.

We have every now and then, as a Church, a little to do with politics, and a little to do with finance, for we are still in the world. But I love to see in all Churches everything kept in the background, compared with soul-saving work. This must be first and foremost. Educate the people yes, certainly. We take an interest in everything which will do good to our fellow citizens, for we are men as well as Christians. But first and foremost our business is to win souls, to bring men to Jesus, to hunt up those who bear Heavens image, though lost and fallen. This is what we must be devoted to. This is the main and chief concern of Believersthe very reason for the existence of a Church. If she regards it not, she forgets her highest end.

Now note that the woman having thus set her heart to find her money, she used the most fit and proper means to accomplish her end. First, she lit a candle. So does the Holy Spirit in the Church. In Eastern dwellings it would be necessary, if you lost a piece of money and wanted to find it, to light a candle at any time. For in our Saviors day glass was not used, and the windows of houses were only little slits in the side of the wall, and the rooms were very dark. Almost all the Oriental houses are very dark to this day, and if anything is dropped as small as a piece of silver, it must be looked for with a candle even at high noon.

Now, the sphere in which the Church moves here on earth is a dim twilight of mental ignorance, and moral darkness, and in order to find a lost soul, light must be brought to bear upon it. The Holy Spirit uses the light of the Gospel. He convinces men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. The woman lit a candle, and even thus the Holy Spirit lights up some chosen man whom He makes to be a light in the world. He calls to Himself who He wills, and makes him a lamp to shine upon the people.

Such a man will have to be consumed in his calling. Like a candle he will be burnt up in light-giving. Earnest zeal, and laborious self-sacrifice will eat him up. So may this Church, and every Church of God, be continually using up her anointed men and women who shall be as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, to find out lost souls.

But she was not content with her candle. She fetched her broomshe swept the house. If she could not find the silver as things were in the house, she brought the broom to bear upon the accumulated dust. Oh, how a Christian Church, when it is moved by the Holy Spirit, cleanses herself and purges all her work! Perhaps, she says, some of our members are inconsistent, and so men are hardened in sin. These offenders must be put away. The tone of religion is lowthat may be hindering the conversion of soulsit must be raised.

Perhaps our statements of Truth, and our ways of proclaiming it, are not the most likely to command attentionwe must amend them. We must use the best possible methods. We must, in fact, sweep the whole house. I delight to see an earnest house-sweeping by confession of sin at a Prayer Meeting, or by a searching discoursea house-sweeping when everyone is earnest to reform himself, and to get nearer to God Himself by a revival of his own personal piety. This is one of the means by which the Church is enabled to find the hidden ones.

Besides this, all the neighborhood round the Church (for the house is the sphere in which the Church moves), must be ransacked, stirred, turned overin a wordswept. A Church that is really in earnest after souls will endeavor to penetrate the gloom of poverty and stir the heaps of profligacy. She will hunt high and hunt low if by any means she may rescue from destruction the precious thing upon which her heart is set.

Carefully note that this seeking after the lost piece of silver with fitting instruments, the broom and the candle, was attended with no small stir. She swept the housethere was dust in her eyes. If any neighbors were in the house there was dust for them. You cannot sweep a house without causing some confusion and temporary discomfort. We sometimes hear persons complain of certain Christians for making too much ado about religion. The complaint shows that something is being done, and in all probability some success being achieved. Those people who have no interest in the lost silver are annoyed at the dust.

It is getting down their throats, and they cough at it. Never mind, good Woman, sweep again and make them grumble more. Another will say, I do not approve of religious excitement. I am for quiet and orderly modes of procedure. I dare say that this good womans neighbor, when she came in to make a call, exclaimed in disgust, Why, Mistress, there is not a chair to sit down upon in comfort, and you are so taken up about this lost money that you scarce give me an answer. Why, you are wasting candle at a great rate, and seem quite in a fever. Well, the good woman would answer, but I must find my piece of silver, and in order to seek it out I can bear a little dust myself, and so must you if you wish to stop here while I am searching.

An earnest Church will be sure to experience a degree of excitement when it is soul-hunting, and very cautious, very fastidious, very critical people will find fault. Never mind them, my Brethren, sweep on and let them talk on. Never mind making a dust if you find the money. If souls are saved, irregularities and singularities are as the small dust of the balance. If men are brought to Jesus, care nothing what cavilers say. Sweep on, sweep on, even though men exclaim, They that turn the world upside down are come here, also. Though confusion and stir, and even persecution be the present resultif the finding of an immortal soul is the ultimate effectyou will be well repaid for it.

It is to be remarked, also, that in the seeking of this piece of silver the coin was sought in a most engrossing manner. For a time nothing was thought of but the lost silver. Here is a candlethe good woman does not read by the light of it, nor mend her garments. No, but the candle light is all spent on that piece of money. All its light is consecrated to the search. Here is a broomthere is other work for the broom to do, but for the present it sweeps for the silver and for nothing else.

Here are two bright eyes in the good womans headyes, but they look for nothing but the lost money. She does not care what else may be in the house or out of ither money she cares forand that she must find. And here she is with candle, broom, strength, eyesight, faculties of mind, and limbs of body all employed in searching for the lost treasure. It is just so when the Holy Spirit works in a Church. The preacher, like a candle, yields his light, but it is all with the view of finding out the sinner and letting him see his lost estate. Whether it is the broom of the Law or the

light of the Gospel, all is meant for the sinner.

All the Holy Spirits wisdom is engaged to find the sinner, and all the living Churchs talent and substance and power are put forth if by any means the sinner may be saved. It is a fair picture! May I see it daily. How earnestly souls are sought for when the Spirit of God is truly in His Church! One other thought only. This woman sought for her piece of silver continuouslytill she found it. May you and I, as parts of the Church of God, look after wandering souls till we find them.

We say they discourage us. No doubt that piece of silver did discourage the woman who sought it. We complain that men do not appear inclined to religion. Did the piece of money lend the housewife any help? Was it any assistance to her? She did the seeking, she did it all. And the Holy Spirit, through you, my Brother, seeks the salvation of the sinner, not expecting the sinner to help Him, for the sinner is averse to being found. What? Were you repulsed the other day by one whose spiritual good you longed for? Go again! Were your invitations laughed at? Invite again! Did you become the subject of ridicule through your earnest entreaties? Entreat again!

Those are not always the least likely to be saved who at first repel our efforts. A harsh reception is sometimes only an intimation that the heart recognizes the power of the Truth of God though it does not desire at present to yield to it. Persevere, Brother, till you find the soul you seek. You who spend so much effort in your Sunday school classuse still your candleenlighten the childs mind still. Sweep the house till you find what you seek. Never give up the child till it is brought to Christ.

You, in your senior class, dealing with that young man or young womancease not from your private prayers and from your personal admonitionstill that heart belongs to Jesus. You who can preach in the streets, or visit the lodging houses, or go from door to door with tracts, I charge you allfor you can all do somethingnever give up the pursuit of sinners until they are safely lodged in Jesus hands. We must have them saved! With all the intense perseverance of the woman who turned everything upside down, and counted all things but loss that she might but find her treasureso may we also, the Spirit of God working in usupset everything of rule and conventionality, and form and difficultyif we may but by any means save some, and bring out of the dust those who bear the Kings image, and are dear to the Kings heart.

III. Time has fled! Alas, too swiftly, and so I must close with the third point, which is the piece of silver found. Found! In the first place, this was the womans ultimatum, and nothing short of it. She never stopped until the coin was found. So it is the Holy Spirits designnot that the sinner should be brought into a hopeful statebut that he should be actually saved. And this is the Churchs great concern, not that people be made hearersnot that they be made orthodox professorsbut that they be really changed and renewed, regenerated and born-again.

The woman herself found the piece of money . It did not turn up by accident, nor did some neighbor step in and find it. The Spirit of God Himself finds sinners, and the Church of God herself, as a rule, is the instrument of their recovery. Dear Brethren, a few years ago there was a kind of slur cast upon the visible Church by many enthusiastic, but mistaken persons, who dreamed that the time was come for doing away with organized effort. They were for irregular agencies outside of the visible Church doing all the work. Certain remarkable men sprang up whose ferocious censures almost amounted to attacks upon the recognized Churches.

Their efforts were apart from the regular ministry, and in some cases ostentatiously in opposition to it. It was as much their aim to pull down the existing Church as to bring in converts. I ask any man who has fairly watched these effortswhat have they come to? I never condemned them, nor will I. But I do venture to say today, in the light of their history, that they have not superseded regular Church work and never will. The masses were to be aroused, but where are the boasted results? What has become of many of these much-vaunted works?

Those who have worked in connection with a Church of God have achieved permanent usefulness. Those who acted as separatist agencies, though they blazed for awhile before the public eye and filled the corners of the newspapers with spiritual puffery, are now either altogether or almost extinct. Where are the victories which were to be won by these freebooters? Echo answers, Where?

We have to fall back on the old disciplined troops. God means to bless the Church still, and it is through the Church that He will continue to send a benediction upon the sons of men. I am glad to hear of anybody preaching the Gospel if Christ is preached! I therein do rejoice, yes, and will rejoice. I remember the Masters words, Forbid them not! He that is not against us is for us. Still the mass of conversions will come through the Church, and by her regular organized efforts. The woman who lights the candle and sweeps the house, to whom the silver belongs, will herself find it.

Now notice when she had found it what she did, she rejoiced. The greater her trouble in searching, the higher her joy in finding. What joy there is in the Church of God when sinners are converted! We have our high holidays. We have our mirthful days downstairs in the lecture hall, when we hear of souls turned from the paths of the Destroyerand in the vestries behind, your pastors and elders often experience such joy as only Heaven can equal, when we have heard the stories of souls emancipated from the slavery of sin, and led into the perfect liberty which Jesus gives! The Church rejoices!

Next, she calls her friends and neighbors to share her joy. I am afraid we do not treat our friends and neighbors with quite enough respect, or remember to invite them to our joys. Who are they? I think the angels are here meant. Not only the angels in Heaven, but those who are watching here below. Note well that when the shepherd took home the sheep, it is written, There shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents. But it does not mention Heaven here, nor speak of the future, but it is written,

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God.

Now, the Church is on earth, and the Holy Spirit is on earth, at work. When there is a soul saved, the angels down below, who keep watch and ward around the faithful, and so are our friends and neighbors, rejoice with us. Know you not that angels are present in our assemblies? For this reason the Apostle tells us that the woman has her head covered in the assembly. He says, Because of the angels, for they love order and decorum. The angels are wherever the saints are, beholding our orders and

rejoicing in our joy.

When we see conversions we may bid them rejoice, too, and they will praise God with us. I do not suppose the rejoicing ends there. For as angels are always ascending and descending upon the sons of man, they soon convey the tidings to the hosts above, and Heaven rejoices over one repenting sinner. The joy is a present joy. It is a joy in the house, in the Church in her own sphere. It is the joy of her neighbors who are round about her here below. All other joy seems swallowed up in thisas every other occupation was suspended to find the lost silver, so every other joy is hushed when the precious thing is found.

The Church of God has a thousand joys! The joy of her saints ascending to the skies. The joy of her saints ripening for Glory. The joy of such as contend with sin and overcome it, and grow in Grace and receive the promise. But the chief joy in the Church, which swallows all others, as Aarons rod swallowed up the other rodsis the joy over the lost soul which, after much sweeping and searching, is found at last! The practical lesson to the unconverted is just this. Dear Friend, see what value is set upon you. You think that nobody cares for youwhy, Heaven and earth care for you! You say, I am as nothing, a castaway, and I am utterly worthless. No, you are not worthless to the blessed Spirit, nor worthless to the Church of Godshe longs for you.

See, again, how false that suspicion of yours is that you will not be welcome if you come to Christ. Welcome! Welcome! Why, the Church is searching for you! The Spirit of God is searching for you. Do not talk of welcomeyou will be a great deal more than welcome! Oh, how glad will Christ be, and the Spirit be, and the Church be, to receive you! Ah, but you complain that you have done nothing to make you fit for mercy. Talk not sowhat had the lost piece of money done? What could it do?

It was lost and helpless. They who sought it did all. He who seeks you will do all for you. O poor Soul, since Christ now bids you come, come! If His Spirit draws you, yield! Since the promise now speaks, Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool, accept the promise! Believe in Jesus. God bless you and save you, for Jesus sake. Amen.

Portions of Scripture read before sermonPsalm 126 and Luke 15   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1189 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE TURNING POINT   
NO. 1189

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 23, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And he arose, and came to his father.   
Luke 15:20.**

THIS sentence expresses the true turning point in the Prodigals life story. Many other matters led up to it and before he came to it there was much in him that was very hopeful. But this was the point, itself, and had he never reached it he would have remained a prodigal and would never have been the Prodigal restoredand his life would have been a warning rather than an instruction to us. He arose, and came to his father. Speaking, as I do, in extreme weakness, I have no words to spare. And while my voice holds out I shall speak straight to the point. I pray the Lord to make every syllable practical and powerful by His Holy Spirit.

I. We shall begin by noticing that HERE WAS ACTIONHe arose, and came to his father. He had already been in a state of thoughtfulness. He had come to himself, but now he was to go further and come to his father. He had considered the past and weighed ithe had seen the hollowness of all the worlds pleasures. He had seen his condition in reference to his father and his prospects if he remained in the far-off country. He had thought upon what he ought to do and what would be the probable result of such a course. But now he passed beyond the dreaminess of thought into matter-of-fact acting and doing!

How long will it be, dear Hearers, before you will do the same? We are glad to have you thoughtful. We hope that a great point is gained when you are led to consider your ways, to ponder your condition and to look earnestly into the futurefor thoughtlessness is the ruin of many a traveler to eternityand by its means the unwary fall into the deep pit of carnal security and perish! But some of you have been among the thoughtful quite long enough! It is time you passed into a more practical stage. It is high time that you came to actionit would have been better if you had acted already, for, in the matter of reconciliation to God, first thoughts are best. When a mans life hangs on a thread and Hell is just before him, his path is clear and a second thought is superfluous. The first impulse to escape from danger and lay hold on Christ is that which you would be wise to follow.

Some of you whom I now address have been thinking, and thinking, and thinking till I fear that you will think yourselves into Perdition! May you, by Divine Grace, be turned from thinking to believing, or else your thoughts will become the undying worm of your torment. The Prodigal had also passed beyond mere regret. He was deeply grieved that he had left his fathers house. He lamented his lavish expenditure upon wantonness and rebelling. He mourned that the son of such a father should be degraded

into a swineherd in a foreign land. But he now proceeded from regret to repentance and bestirred himself to escape from the condition over which he mourned. What is the use of regret if we continue in sin? By all means pull up the sluices of your grief if the floods will turn the wheel of action but you may as well reserve your tears if they mean no more than idle sentimentalism.

What avails it for a man to say he repents of his misconduct if he still perseveres in it? We are glad when sinners regret their sin and mourn the condition into which sin has brought them. But if they go no further, their regrets will only prepare them for eternal remorse. Had the Prodigal become inactive through despondency, or stolid through sullen grief, he would have perished, far away from his fathers homeas it is to be feared many will whose sorrow for sin leads them into a proud unbelief and willful despair of Gods love. But, by Gods Grace, he was wise, for he shook off the drowsiness of his despondency and, with resolute determination, arose and came to his father. Oh, when will you sad ones be wise enough to do the same? When will your thinking and your sorrow give place to practical obedience to the Gospel?

The Prodigal also pressed beyond mere resolves. That is a sweet verse which says, I will arise, but that is far better which says, And he arose. Resolves are good, like blossoms, but actions are better, for they are the fruits. We are glad to hear from you, the resolution, I will turn to God. But holy angels in Heaven do not rejoice over resolutionsthey reserve their music for sinners who actually repent! Many of you, like the son in the parable, have said, I go, Sir, but you have not gone. You are as ready at forgetting as you are at resolving. Every earnest sermon, every death in your family, every funeral knell for a neighbor, every pricking of conscience, every touch of sickness sets you a resolving to amendbut your promissory notes are never honoredyour repentance only ends in words. Your goodness is as the dew which at early dawn hangs each blade of grass with gems, but leaves the fields all parched and dry when the suns burning heat is poured upon the pasture.

You mock your friends and trifle with your own souls! You have often, in this house, said, Let me reach my chamber and I will fall upon my knees. But on the way home you have forgotten what manner of men you wereand sin has confirmed its tottering throne. Have you not dallied long enough? Have you not sufficiently lied unto God? Should you not, now, give over resolving and proceed to the solemn business of your souls like men of common sense? You are in a sinking vessel and the lifeboat is near, but your mere resolve to enter it will not prevent your going down with the sinking craft! As sure as you are a living man, you will drown unless you take the actual leap for life. He arose and came to his father.

Now, observe that this action of the Prodigal was immediate and without further parley. He did not go back to the owner of the swine and say, Will you raise my wages? If not, I must leave. Had he parleyed he had been lost! He gave his old master no notice! He cancelled his indentures by running away! I would that sinners here would break their league with death and violate their covenant with Hell, by escaping for their lives to Jesus, who receives all such runaways! We need neither leave nor license for quitting the service of sin and Satan! Neither is it a subject which demands a months considerationin this matter instantaneous action is the surest wisdom!

Lot did not stop to consult the king of Sodom as to whether he might quit his dominionsneither did he consult the parish officers as to the propriety of speedily deserting his homebut with the angels hand pressing them, he and his family fled the city. No, one fled notshe looked and lingeredand that lingering cost her her life! That pillar of salt is the eloquent monitor to us to avoid delays when we are bid to flee for our lives. Sinner, do you wish to be a pillar of salt? Will you halt between two opinions until Gods anger shall doom you to final impenitence? Will you trifle with mercy till Justice smites you? Up, Man, and while your day of Grace continues, fly into the arms of Love!

The text implies that the Prodigal aroused himself and put forth all his energies. It is said, he arose. The word suggests that he had, till then, been asleep upon the bed of sloth, or the couch of presumption. Like Samson in Delilahs lap, he had been supine, inactive and unstrung. But now, startled from his lethargy, he lifts up his eyes, girds up his loins, shakes off the spell which had enthralled him and puts forth every power. He arouses his whole nature and he spares no exertion until he returns to his father. Men are not saved between sleeping and waking. The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force. Grace does not stupefy us, it but arouses us. Surely, Sirs, it is worthwhile making an awful effort to escape from eternal wrath! It is worthwhile summoning up every faculty, power, emotion and passion of your being and saying to yourself, I cannot be lost! I will not be lost! I am resolved that I will find mercy through Jesus Christ.

The worst of it is, O Sinners, you are so sluggish, so indifferent, so ready to let things happen as they may! Sin has bewitched and benumbed you. You sleep as on beds of down and forget that you are in danger of Hell fire! You cry, A little more rest, and a little more slumber, and a little more folding of the arms to sleep, and so you sleep on, though your damnation slumbers not. Would to God you could be awakened! It is not in the power of my voice to arouse you, but may the Lord Himself alarm you, for never were men more in danger! Let but your breath fail, or your blood pause and you are lost forever! More fragile than a cobweb is that life on which your eternal destiny depends! If you were wise you would not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids till you had found your God and been forgiven. Oh, when will you come to real action? How long will it be before you believe in Jesus? How long will you sport between the jaws of Hell? How long will you dare provoke the living God?

II. Secondly, HERE WAS A SOUL COMING INTO ACTUAL CONTACT WITH GODHe arose and came to his father. It would have been of no avail for him to have arisen if he had not come to his father. This is what the sinner has to do and what the Spirit enables him to do, namely, to

come straight away to his God. But, alas, very commonly, when men begin to be anxious, they go round about and hasten to a friend to tell him about it, or they even resort to a deceitful priest and seek help from him! They fly to a saint, or to a virgin and ask these to be mediators for them instead of accepting the only Mediator, Jesus Christ, and going to God, at once, by Him. They fly to outward forms and ceremonies, or they turn to their Bibles, their prayers, their repentances, or their sermons. In fact, to anything rather than their God.

But the Prodigal knew better. He went to his fatherand it will be a grand day for you, O Sinner, when you do the same. Go straight away to your God in Christ Jesus. Come here, says the priest. Pass that fellow by! Get away to your Father. Reject an angel from Heaven if he would detain you from the Lord. Go personally, directly, and at once to God in Christ Jesus. But surely I must perform some ceremony first? The Prodigal did nothe arose and went at once to his father. Sinner, you must come to Godand Jesus is the way. Go to Him, then! Tell Him you have done wrong. Confess your sins to Him and yield yourself to Him. Cry, Father, I have sinned: forgive me, for Jesus sake.

Alas, there are many anxious souls who do not go to others, but they look to themselves. They sit down and cry, I need to repent! I need to feel my need! I need to be humble. O Man, get up! What are you doing? Leave yourself and go to your Father! Oh, but I have so little hope! My faith is very weak and I am full of fears. What do your hopes or your fears matter while you are away from your Father? Your salvation does not lie within yourself, but in the Lords good will to you. You will never be at peace till, leaving all your doubts and your hopes, you come to your God and rest in His bosom.

Oh, but I need to conquer my propensities to sin, I need to master my strong temptations. I know what it is you need. You need the best robe without your Fathers giving it to you, and shoes on your feet of your own procuringyou do not like going in a beggars suit and receiving all from the Lords loving hands! But this pride of yours must be given up and you must get away to God, or perish forever! You must forget yourself, or only remember yourself so as to feel that you are bad throughout and not worthy to be called Gods child!

Give yourself up as a sinking vessel that is not worth pumping, but must be left to go down, and get into the life-boat of Free Grace. Think of God your Fatherof Him, I say, and of His dear Son, the only Mediator and Redeemer of the sons of men! There is your hopeto fly away from self and to reach your Father. Do I hear you say, Well, I shall continue in the means of Grace and I hope to find my God there. I tell you, if you do that and refuse to go to God, the means of Grace will be the means of damnation to you! I must wait at the pool, says one. Then I solemnly warn you that you will lie there and die, for Jesus does not command you to lie there! His bidding is, Take up your bed and walk. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. You have to go unto your Fatherand not to the pool of Bethesda, or any other pool of ordinances or means of Divine Grace.

But I mean to pray, says one. What would you pray for? Can you expect the Lord to hear you while you will not hear Him? You will pray best with your head in your Fathers bosomthe prayers of an unyielding, disobedient, unbelieving heart are mockeries! Prayers, themselves, will ruin you if they are made a substitute for going at once to God. Suppose the Prodigal had sat down at the swine trough and said, I will pray here? What would it have availed him? Or suppose he had wept there? What good would have come of it? Praying and weeping were good enough when he had come to his fatherbut they could not have been substituted for it. Sinner, your business is with God! Hasten to Him at once! You have nothing to do with yourself, or your own works, or what others can do for youthe turning point of salvation is, he arose and came to his father.

There must be a real, living, earnest contact of your poor guilty soul with God! There must be a recognition that there is a God and that God can be spoken to. And there must be an actual speech of your soul to Him through Jesus Christfor God is only accessible in Christ Jesusthat is the only way! Going thus to God, we tell Him that we are all wrong and wish to be set right. We tell Him we wish to be reconciled to Him and are ashamed that we should have sinned against Him. We then put our trust in His Son and we are saved. O Soul, go to God! It matters not though the prayer you come with may be a very broken prayer, or even if it has mistakes in it as the Prodigals prayer had when he said, Make me as one of Your hired servants. The language of the prayer is not significant so long as you really approach God. Him that comes to Me, says Jesus, I will in no wise cast out. And Jesus ever lives to make intercessions for them that come to God through Him!

Here, then, is the great Protestant doctrine. The Romish doctrine says you must go round by the back door and half-a-dozen of the Lords servants must knock for youand even then you may never be heard. But the grand old Protestant doctrine is, come to God yourself! Come with no other mediator than Jesus Christ! Come just as you are without merits and good works! Trust in Jesus and your sins will be forgiven you! That is my second pointthere was actionand that action was contact with God.

III. Now, thirdly, IN THAT ACTION THERE WAS AN ENTIRE YIELDING UP OF HIMSELF. In the Prodigals case, his proud independence and selfwill were gone. In other days he demanded his portion and resolved to spend it as he pleased. But now he is willing to be as much under rule as a hired servant. He has had enough of being his own master. He is weary of the distance from God which self-will always creates. He longs to get into a childs true place, namely, that of dependence and loving submission. The great mischief of all was his distance from his Father and he now feels it to be so. His great thought is to remove that distance by humbly returning, for then he feels that all other ills will come to an end. He yields up his cherished freedom, his boasted independence, his liberty to think and do and say whatever he chose and he longs to come under loving rule and wise guidance.

Sinner, are you ready for this? If so, come and welcome! Your Father longs to press you to His bosom! The Prodigal gave up all idea of selfjustification, for he said, I have sinned. Before he would have said, I have a right to do as I like with my own. Who is to dictate how I shall spend my own money? What if I sow a few wild oats? Every young man does the same. I have been very generous, if nothing else, nobody can call me greedy. I am no hypocrite. Look at your canting Methodists, how they deceive people! Theres nothing of that in me, Ill warrant you! I am an outspoken man of the world and, after all, a good deal better in disposition than my elder brother, fine fellow though he pretends to be. But now the Prodigal no longer boasts. Not a syllable of self-praise falls from his lips. He mournfully confesses, I have sinned against Heaven and before you.

Sinner, if you would be saved, you, also, must come down from your high places and acknowledge your iniquity. Confess that you have done wrong and do not try to extenuate your offense. Do not offer apologies and make your case better than it is, but humbly plead guilty and leave your soul in Jesus hands. Of two things, to sin or to deny the sin, probably to deny the sin is the worse of the two, and shows a blacker heart. Acknowledge your fault, Man, and tell your heavenly Father that if it were not for His mercy you would have been in Hell, and that as it is you richly deserve to be there even now! Make your case rather blacker than it is if you canI say this because I know you cannot do any such thing! When a man is in the hospital it cannot be of any service to him to pretend to be better than he ishe will not receive any more medical attention on that account, but rather the other way around, for the worse his case the more likely is the physician to give him special notice.

Oh, Sinner, lay bare before God your sores, your putrefying sores of sinthe horrid ulcers of your deep depravityand cry, O Lord, have mercy upon me! This is the way of wisdom. Have done with pride and self-righteousness! Make your appeal to the undeserved pity of the Lord and you will advance. Observe that the Prodigal yielded himself up so thoroughly that he admitted his fathers love to him to be an aggravation of his guilt. So I take it he means when he says, Father, I have sinned. It adds an emphasis to the, I have sinned, when it follows after the word, Father. You good God, I have broken Your good laws. You loving, tender, merciful God, I have done wrong wantonly and wickedly against You. You have been a very loving Father to me and I have been a most ungenerous and shameless traitor to You, rebelling without cause. I confess this frankly, humbly, and with many tears. Ah, had You been a tyrant I might have gathered some apology from Your severitybut You have been a Fatherand this makes it worse that I should sin against You.

It is sweet to hear such a confession as this poured out into the Fathers bosom. The penitent also yielded up all his supposed rights and claims upon his father, saying, I am not worthy to be called your son. He might have said, I have sinned, but still I am your child. And most of us would have thought it a very justifiable argument. But he does not say so. He is too humble for that. He says, I am no more worthy to be called your son. A sinner is really broken down when he acknowledges that if God would have no mercy on him, but cast him away forever, it would be no more than justice

*Should saddled vengeance seize my breath, I must pronounce You just in death.   
And, if my soul were sent to Hell,   
Your righteous Law approves it well.*

That soul is not far from peace which has ceased arguing and submits to the sentence.

Oh, Sinner, I urge you, if you would find speedy rest, go and throw yourself at the foot of the Cross where God meets such as you are, and say, Lord, here I am. Do what You will with me. Never a word of excuse will I offer, nor one single plea by way of extenuation. I am a mass of guilt and misery, but pity me, oh, pity me! No rights or claims have I. I have forfeited the rights of creatureship by becoming a rebel against You. I am lost and utterly undone before the bar of Your justice. From that justice I flee and hide myself in the wounds of Your Son. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions!

Once again, here was such a yielding up of himself to his father that no terms or conditions are mentioned or implied. He begs to be received, but a servants place is good enough for him. Among the dish washers of the kitchen he is content to take his place, so long as he may be forgiven. He does not ask for a little liberty to sin, or stipulate for a little selfrighteousness where he may boasthe gives all up. He is willing to be anything or nothing, just as his father pleases, so that he may but be numbered with his household. No weapons of rebellion are in his hands. No secret opposition to his fathers rule lingers in his soul. He is completely subdued and lies at his fathers feet. Our Lord never crushed a soul yet that lay prostrate at His feet and He never will! He will stoop down and say, Rise, My child. Rise, for I have forgiven you. Go and sin no more. I have loved you with an everlasting love.

Come and let us return unto the Lord, for He has torn, but He will heal us. He has smitten, but He will bind us up. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax!

IV. Notice further, and fourthly, that IN THIS ACT THERE WAS A MEASURE OF FAITH IN HIS FATHERa measure, I say, meaning not much faith, but some. A little faith saves the soul! There was faith in his fathers power. He said, In my fathers house there is bread enough and to spare. Sinner, do you believe that God is able to save you? Do you believe that through Jesus Christ He is able to supply your souls needs? Can you get as far as this, Lord, if You will it, You can make me clean? The Prodigal also had some faith in his fathers readiness to pardon, for if he had not so hoped he would never have returned to his father at all! If he had been sure that his father would never smile upon him he would never have returned to him. Sinner, do you believe that God is merciful?

So He is. Believe, through Jesus Christ, that He wills not the death of the sinner, but had rather that he should turn to Him and live, for as surely as God is, this is the Truth of God. Do not believe a lie concerning your God. The Lord is not hard or harsh! He rejoices to pardon great transgressions!

The Prodigal also believed in his fathers readiness to bless Him. He felt sure that his father would go as far as propriety would permit, for he said, I am not worthy to be called your son, but make me at least your servant. In this, also, he admitted that his father was so good that even to be his servant would be a great matter! He was content, even, to get the lowest place, so long as he might be under the shade of so good a protector. Ah, poor Sinner, do you believe that God will have mercy on you if He can do so consistently with His justice? If you believe that, I have good news to tell you! Jesus Christ, His Son, has offered such an Atonement that God can be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes! He has mercy upon the most vile and justifies the ungodly! He accepts the very chief of sinners through His dear Son!

Oh, Soul, have faith in the Atonement! The Atonement made by the personal sacrifice of the Son of God must be infinitely precious! Believe that there is efficacy enough in it for you! It is your safety to fly to that Atonement and cling to the Cross of Christand you will honor God by doing soit is the only way in which you can honor Him. You can honor Him by believing that He can save you, even you. The truest faith is that which believes in the mercy of God in the teeth of conscious unworthiness. The penitent in the parable went to his father, too unworthy to be called his son and yet he said, My father. Faith has a way of seeing the blackness of sin and yet believing that God can make the soul as white as snow! It is not faith that says, I am a little sinner and therefore God can forgive me. But that is faith which cries, I am a great sinner! An accursed and condemned sinner, and yet, for all that, Gods infinite mercy can forgive me and the blood of Christ can make me clean.

Believe in the teeth of your feelings and in spite of your conscience! Believe in God, though everything within you seems to say, He cannot save me. He will not save me. Believe in God, Sinner, over the tops of mountains of sins! Do as John Bunyan says he did, for he was so afraid of his sins and of the punishment due, that he could not but run into Gods arms! And he said, Though He had held a drawn sword in His hands, I would have run on the very point of it rather than have kept away from Him. So do you, poor Sinner! Believe your God! Believe in nothing else, but trust your God, and you will get the blessing. It is wonderful, the power of faith over Godit binds His justice and constrains His Grace!

I do not know how to illustrate it better than by a little story. When I walked down my garden some time ago I found a dog amusing himself among the flowers. I knew that he was not a good gardener, and no dog of mine, so I threw a stick at him and bade him be gone. After I had done so, he conquered me and made me ashamed of having spoken roughly to him, for he picked up my stick and, wagging his tail right pleasantly, he brought the stick to me and dropped it at my feet! Do you think I could strike him or drive him away after that? No, I patted him and called him good names. The dog had conquered the man! And if you, poor Sinner, dog as you are, can have confidence enough in God to come to Him just as you are, it is not in His heart to spurn you!

There is an Omnipotence in simple faith which will conquer even the Divine Being, Himself! Only trust Him as He reveals Himself in Jesus and you shall find salvation.

V. I have not time or strength to dwell longer here, and so I must notice, fifthly, that THIS ACT OF COMING INTO CONTACT WITH GOD IS PERFORMED BY THE SINNER JUST AS HE IS. I do not know how wretched the Prodigals appearance may have been, but I will be bound to say he had grown none the sweeter by having fed swine! Nor do I suppose his garments had been very sumptuously embroidered by gathering husks for then from the trees. Yet, just as he was, he came! Surely he might have spent an hour profitably in cleaning his flesh and his clothes. But no, he said, I will arise, and no sooner said than done! He did arise and he came to his father.

Every moment that a sinner stays away from God in order to get betterhe is but adding to his sinfor the vilest sin of all is his being away from God! And the longer he stays in it, the more he sins! The attempt to perform good works apart from God is like the effort of a thief to set his stolen goods in orderhis only real duty is to return them at once. The very same pride which leads men

away from God may be seen in their self-conceited notion that they can improve themselves while they refuse to return to Him! The essence of their fault is that they are far off from Godand whatever they do, so long as that distance remainsnothing is effectually done. I say the evil of the whole matter is distance from God, and therefore the commencement of setting matters right lies in arising and returning to Him from whom they have departed.

The Prodigal was bound to go home just as he was, for there was nothing that he could do. He was reduced to such extremities that he could not purchase a fresh piece of cloth to mend his garments, nor a farthings worth of soap with which to cleanse his flesh. And it is a great mercy when a man is so spiritually reduced that he cannot do anything but go to his God as a beggarwhen he is so bankrupt that he cannot pay a farthing in the poundwhen he is so lost that he cannot even repent or believe, apart from God, but feels that he is forever undone unless the Lord shall interpose. It is our wisdom to go to God for everything.

Moreover, there was nothing needed from the Prodigal but to return to his father! When a child who has done wrong comes back, the more its face is blurred with tears, the better! When a beggar ask for charity, the more his clothes are in rags, the better. Are not rags and sores the very livery of beggars? I once gave a man a pair of shoes because he said he was in need of them. But after he had put them on and gone a little way I overtook him in a gateway taking them off in order to go barefoot again. I think they were patent leather and what should a beggar do in such attire? He was changing them for, old shoes and cloutedthose were

suitable to his business! A sinner is never so well arrayed for pleading as when he comes in rags. At his worst, the sinner, for making an appeal to mercy, is at his best.

And so, Sinners, there is no need for you to lingercome just as you are! But must we not wait for the Holy Spirit? Ah, Beloved, he who is willing to arise and go to his Father has the Holy Spirit! It is the Holy Spirit who moves us to return to Godbut it is the spirit of the flesh or of the devil that would bid us wait. And so, Sinners? Some of you are sitting in those pewswhere are you? I cannot find you out, but my Master can! He has made this sermon on purpose for you. Well, but I would like to get home and pray. Pray where you are, in the pew! But I cannot speak out aloud. You may if you likeI wont stop you. But I should not like to. Well, dont, then. God can hear you without a sound, though I wish sometimes we did hear people cry out, What must I do to be saved? I would gladly hear the prayer, God be merciful to me a sinner.

But if men cannot hear you, the Lord can hear the cries of your hearts. Now, just sit still a minute, and say, My God I must come to You. You are in Jesus Christ and in Him You have already come a great way to meet me. My soul needs You. Take me, now, and make me what I ought to be. Forgive me and accept me. It is the turning point of a mans life when that is done, wherever it iswhether in a workshop, or in a saw-pit, in a Church, or in a tabernacleit does not matter where. This is the point the getting to God in Christ, giving all up and by faith resting in the mercy of God.

VI. The last point of all is thisTHAT ACT WROUGHT THE GREATEST CONCEIVABLE CHANGE IN THE MAN. He was a new man after that. Harlots, winebibbers, you have lost your old companion now! He has gone to his Father, and his Fathers company and yours will never agree. A mans return to his God means his leaving the chambers of vice and the tables of riot. You may depend upon it, whenever you hear of a professing Christian living in uncleanness, he has not been living anywhere near his God. He may have talked a great deal about it, but God and unchastity never agree. If you have friendship with God you will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Now, too, the penitent has done with all degrading works to support himself. You will not find him feeding swine anymore, or making a swine of himself, either, by trusting in priests or sacraments. He will not confess to a priest, again, or pay a penny to get his mother out of Purgatory. He is not such a fool as that any more! He has been to his God on Gods terms, and he does not need any of these shavelings to go to God for him! He has got away from that bondage! No more feeding pigs! No more superstition for him! Why, he says, I have access with boldness to the Mercy Seat and what have I to do with the priests of Rome?

There is a change in him in all ways. Now he has come to his Father, his pride is broken down. He no longer glories in that which he calls his ownall his glory is in his Fathers free pardoning love. He never boasts of what he has, for he admits that he has nothing but what his Father gives him! And though he is far better off than ever he was in his spendthrift days, yet he is as unassuming as a little child. He is a gentlemancommoner upon the bounty of his God and lives from day to day by a royal grant from the table of the King of kings! Pride is gone, but content fills its room. He would have been content to be one of the servants of the househe is much more satisfied to be a child! He loves his Father with a new lovehe cannot even mention His name without saying, And He forgave me! He forgave me freely! He forgave me all, and He said, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. From the day of his restoration, the Prodigal is bound to his Fathers home and reckons it to be one of his greatest blessings that it is written in the Covenant of Grace, I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.

This morning I believe that God, in His mercy, means to call many sinners to Himself! I am often very much surprised to find how the Lord guides my word according to the persons before me. Last Sunday there came here a young son of a gentleman, a foreigner from a distant land, under considerable impressions as to the truth of the Christian religion. His father is a follower of one of the ancient religions of the East and this young gentleman naturally felt it a great difficulty that he would probably make his father angry if he became a Christian. Judge, then, how closely the message of last Sabbath came home to him, when the text was, What if your father answers you roughly? [Sermon No. 1118, A WORD FOR THE PERSECUTED.]

He came to tell me that he thanked God for that message and he hoped to bear up under the trial, should persecution arise. I feel that I am with equal plainness speaking to some of you. I know I am! You are saying, May I now go to God just as I am, and through Jesus Christ yield myself up, and will He forgive me? Dear Brother, or dear Sister, wherever you may be, try it. That is the best thing to dotry itand, if the angels do not set the bells in Heaven ringing, God has altered from what He was last week, for I know He received poor sinners then, and He will receive them now. The worst thing I dread about you is that you should say, I will think about it. Dont think about it! Do it! Concerning this, no more thinking is neededjust do it! Get away to God!

Is it not according to nature that the creature should be at peace with its Creator? Is it not according to your conscience? Is there not something within you which cries, Go to God in Christ Jesus? In the case of that poor Prodigal, the famine said to him, Go home! Bread was dear, meat was scarcehe was hungry and every pang of need said, Go home! Go home! When he went to an old friend and asked him for help, his scowling looks said, Why dont you go home? There is a time with sinners when even their old companions seem to say, We do not want you. You are too miserable and melancholy. Why dont you go home? They sent him to feed swine and the very hogs grunted, Go home! When he picked up those husks and tried to eat them, they crackled, Go home! He looked upon his rags and they gaped at him, Go home. His hungry belly

and his faintness cried, Go home.

Then he thought of his fathers face and how kindly it had looked at him, and it seemed to say, Come home! He remembered the bread, enough and to spare, and every morsel seemed to say, Come home! He pictured the servants sitting down to dinner and feasting to the fulland every one of them seemed to look right away over the wilderness to him and to say, Come home! Your father feeds us well. Come home! Everything said, Come home! Only the devil whispered, Never go back. Fight it out! Better starve than yield! But then he had got away from the devil this once, for he had come to himself, and he said, No. I will arise and go to my father. Oh that you would be equally wise!

Sinner, what is the use of being damned for the sake of a little pride! Yield! Down with your pride! You will not find it so hard to submit if you remember that dear Father who loved us and gave Himself for us in the Person of His own dear Son! You will find it sweet to yield to such a Friend. And when you get your head in His bosom and feel His warm kisses on your cheek, you will soon feel that it is sweet to weep for sin sweet to confess your wrongdoing and sweeter, still, to hear Him say, I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your transgressions. Though your sins are scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

May God Almighty grant that this may be the case with hundreds of you this morning! He shall have all the glory of it, but my heart shall be very glad, for I feel nothing of the spirit of the elder brother within me, but the greatest conceivable joy at the thought of making merry with you, byand-by, when you come to acknowledge my Lord and Master as your Lord and Master and we sit together at the sacramental feast, rejoicing in His love! God bless you, for His sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 15.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK136 (SONG I), 614, 612.  
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THE PRODIGALS RETURN   
NO. 176

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 7, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had kind compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. Luke 15:20.**

ALL persons engaged in education will tell you that they find it far more difficult to make the mind unlearn its errors than to make it receive truth. If we could suppose a man totally ignorant of everything we should have a fairer chance of instructing him quickly and effectually than we should have had if his mind had been previously stored with falsehood. I have no doubt you, each of you, find it harder to unlearn than to learn. To get rid of old prejudices and preconceived notions is a very hard struggle, indeed. It has been well said that those three words, I am mistaken, are the hardest in all the English language to pronounce and certainly it takes very much force to compel us to pronounce them. And after having done so, it is even then difficult to wipe away the slime which an old serpentine error has left upon the heart.

Better for us not to have known at all than to have known the wrong thing. Now I am sure that this truth is never more true than when it applies to God. If I had been let alone to form my notion of God entirely from Holy Scripture, I feel that with the assistance of His Holy Spirit it would have been far more easy for me to understand what He is and how He governs the world than to learn even the truths of His own Word, after the mind had become perverted by the opinions of others. Why, Brethren, who is it that gives a fair representation of God? The Arminian slanders God by accusing Him (not in his own intention, but really so) of unfaithfulness. For he teaches that God may promise what He never performs. That He may give eternal life and promise that those who have it shall never perish and yet they may perish after all. He speaks of God as if He were a mutable being, for he talks of His loving men one day and hating them the next, of His writing their names in the Book of Life one hour and then erasing their names in the next. And the influence of such an error as that is very baneful.

Many children of God who have imbibed these errors in early youth have had to drag along their poor wearied and broken frames for many a daywhereas they might have walked joyfully to Heaven if they had known the Truth of God from the beginning. On the other hand, those who hear the Calvinistic preacher are very apt to misinterpret God. Although we trust we would never speak of God in any other sense than

that in which we find Him represented in sacred Scripture, yet are we well aware that many of our hearers, even through our assertions when most guarded, are apt to get a caricature of God, rather than a true picture of Him. They imagine that God is a severe being, angry and fierce, very easily to be moved to wrath but not so easily to be induced to love. They are apt to think of Him as one who sits in a supreme and lofty state, either totally indifferent to the wishes of His creatures or else determined to have His own way with them, as an arbitrary Sovereign, never listening to their desires, or their woes. Oh, that we could unlearn all these fallacies and believe God to be what He is!

Oh that we could come to Scripture and there look into that glass which reflects His sacred image and then receive him as He isthe allWise, the all-Just and yet the all-Gracious and all-Loving Jehovah! I shall endeavor this morning, by the help of Gods Holy Spirit, to represent the lovely character of Christ and if I shall be happy enough to have some in my audience who are in the position of the prodigal son in the parable coming to Christ and yet a great way off from HimI shall trust that they will be led by the same Divine Spirit to believe in the loving kindness of Jehovah and so may find peace with God now, before they leave this house of prayer.

When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. First I shall notice the position intended in the words, a great way off. Secondly, I shall notice the peculiar troubles which agitate the minds of those who are in this condition. And then, thirdly, I shall endeavor to teach the great loving kindness of our own adorable God, inasmuch as when we are a great way off, He runs to us and embraces us in the arms of His love.

I. First, then, what is the POSITION signified by being A great way off? I must just notice what is not that position. It is not the position of the man who is careless and entirely regardless of God. For you notice that the prodigal is represented now as having come to himself and as returning to his fathers house. Though it is true that all sinners are a great way off from God whether they know it or not, yet in this particular instance the position of the poor prodigal is intended to signify the character of one who has been aroused by conviction, who has been led to abhor his former life and who sincerely desires to return to God. I shall not, then, this morning specially address the blasphemer and the profane. To him there may be some incidental warning heard, but I shall not specially address such a character. It is another person for whom this text is intendedthe man who has been a blasphemer, if you pleasewho may have been a drunkard and a swearer and what not, but who has now renounced these things and is steadfastly seeking after Christthat he may obtain eternal life. That is the man who is here said to be, though coming to the Lord, a great way off.   
Once again, there is another person who is not intended by this description, namely, the very great man, the Pharisee who thinks himself extremely righteous and has never learned to confess his sin. You, Sir, in your apprehension, are not a great way off. You are not really in the sight of God. You are as far from Him as light from darkness, as the east is from the west. But you are not spoken of here. You are like the prodigal son, only that instead of spending your life righteously, you have run away from your Father. You have hidden in the earth the gold which He gave you and are able to feed upon the husks which swine do eatwhile by a miserable economy of good works you are hoping to save enough of your fortune to support yourself here and in eternity. Your hope of selfsalvation is a fallacy and you are not addressed in the words of the text. It is the man who knows himself lost, but desires to be saved, who is here declared to be met by God and received with affectionate embraces.

And now we come to the question, Who is the man and why is he said to be a great way off? For he seems to be very near the kingdom now that he knows his need and is seeking the Savior. I reply, in the first place, he is a great way off in his own apprehensions. You are here this morning and you have an idea that never was man so far from God as you are. You look back upon your past life and you remember how you have slighted God, despised His Sabbath, neglected His Book, trampled upon the blood of sprinkling and rejected all the invitations of His mercy. You turn over the pages of your history and you remember the sins which you have committedthe sins of your youth and your former transgressionsthe crimes of your manhood and the riper sins of your older years. Like black waves dashing upon a dark shore they roll in wave upon wave upon your poor troubled memory. There comes a little wave of your childish folly and over that there leaps one of your youthful transgressions and over the head of this there comes a very Atlantic billow of your manhoods transgressions.

At the sight of them you stand astonished and amazed. O Lord, my God, how deep is the gulf which divides me from Yourself and where is the power that can bridge it? I am separated from You by leagues of sin. Whole mountains of my guilt are piled upwards between me and Yourself. O God, should You destroy me now You would be just. And if You bring me to Yourself it must be nothing less than a power as Omnipotent as that which made the world which can ever do it. Oh, how far am I from God! Some of you would be startled this morning, if your neighbors were to give you revelations of their own feelings. If yonder man standing there in the crowd could come into this pulpit and tell what he now feels, you might perhaps be horrified at his description of his own heart.

How many of you have no notion of the way in which a soul is cut and hacked about when it is under the convictions of the Law! If you should hear the man tell what he feels, you would say, Ah, He is a poor deluded enthusiastmen are not so bad as that. Or else you would be apt to think he had committed some nameless crime which he dare not mention

that was preying on his conscience. No, Sir, he has been as moral and as upright as you have been. But should he describe himself as he now discovers himself to be, he would shock you utterly. And yet you are the same, though you feel it not and would indignantly deny it.

When the light of Gods grace comes into your heart, it is something like the opening of the windows of an old cellar that has been shut up for many months. Down in that cellar, which has not been opened for so long, are all kinds of loathsome creatures and a few sickly plants blanched by the darkness. The walls are dark and damp with the trail of reptiles. It is a horrid filthy place in which no one would willingly enter. You may walk there in the dark very securely and except now and then for the touch of some slimy creatureyou would not believe the place were so bad and filthy. Open those shutters, clean a pane of glass, let a little light in and now see how a thousand noxious things have made this place their habitation. Surely it was not the

light that made this place so horrible, but it was the light that showed how horrible it was.

So let Gods grace just open a window and let the light into a mans soul and he will stand astonished to see at what a distance he is from God. Yes, Sir, today you think yourself second to none but the Eternal. You fancy that you can approach His Throne with steady stepit is but little that you have to do to be saved. You imagine that you can accomplish it at any hour and save yourself upon your dying bed as well as now. Ah, Sir, if you could but be touched by Ithuriels wand and made to be in appearance what you are in reality, then you would see that you are very far from God even now. Yes, so far from Him that unless the arms of His grace were stretched out to bring you to Himself, you must perish in your sin. Now I turn my eyes again with hope and trust I have not a few in this large assembly who can say, Sir, I feel I am far from God and sometimes I fear I am so far from Him that He will never have mercy upon me. I dare not lift so much as my eyes towards Heaven. I smite on my breast and say, Lord have mercy upon me, a sinner. Oh, poor Hearthere is a comforting passage for you: When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion on him.

But again, there is a second sense in which some now present feel themselves to be far off from God. Conscience tells every man that if he would be saved he must get rid of his sin. The Antinomian may possibly pretend to believe that men can be saved while they live in sin. But conscience will never allow any man to swallow so egregious a lie as that. I have not one person in this congregation who is not perfectly assured that if he is to be saved he must leave off his drunkenness and his vices. Surely there is not one here so stupefied with the opium of hellish indifference as to imagine that he can revel in his lusts and afterwards wear the white robe of the redeemed in Paradise?

If you imagine you can be partakers of the blood of Christ and yet drink the cup of Belial. If you imagine that you can be members of Satan and members of Christ at the same time, you have less sense than one would give you credit for. No, you know that right arms must be cut off and right eyes plucked outthat the most darling sins must be renouncedif you would enter into the kingdom of God. And I have a man here who is convinced of the unholiness of his life and he has strived to reform, not because he thinks reformation would save him, for he knows better than that, but because he knows that this is one of the first fruits of gracereformation from sin.

Well, poor Man, he has for many years been an inveterate drunkard and he struggles now to overcome the passion. He has almost effected it. But he never had such an Herculean labor to attempt before. For now some temptation comes upon him so strongly that it is as much as he can do to stand against it. And perhaps sometimes since his first conviction of sin he has even fallen into it. Or perhaps it is another vice and you, my Brother, have set your face against it. But there are many bonds and fetters that bind us to our vices. And you find that though it was easy enough to spin the warp and woof of sin togetherit is not so easy to unravel that which you have spun. You cannot purge your house of your idols. You do not yet know how to give up all your lustful pleasures. Not yet can you renounce the company of the ungodly.

You have cut off one by one your most intimate acquaintances but it is very hard to do it completely and you are struggling to accomplish it and you often fall on your knees and cry, O Lord, how far I am from You! What high steps these are which I have to climb! Oh, how can I be saved? Surely, if I cannot purge myself from my old sins, I shall never be able to hold on my way. And even should I get rid of them, I should plunge into them once more. You are crying out, Oh, how great my distance from God! Lord bring me near!

Let me present you with one other aspect of our distance from God. You have read your Bibles and you believe that faith alone can unite the soul to Christ. You feel that unless you can believe in Him who died upon the Cross for your sins you can never see the kingdom of God. But you can say this morning, Sir, I have strived to believe. I have searched the Scriptures, not hours, but days together to find a promise upon which my weary foot might rest. I have been upon my knees many and many a time, earnestly supplicating a Divine blessing. But though I have pleaded, all in vain have I urged my plea, for until now no whisper have I had of grace, no token for good, no sign of mercy. Sir, I have strived to believe and I have said   
I have used all the power I have and have desperately strived to cast

*O could I but believe!   
Then all would easy be.   
I would, but cannotLord, relieve, My help must come from You!*

myself at the Saviors feet and see my sins washed away in His blood. I have not been indifferent to the story of the Cross. I have read it a hundred times and even wept over it. But when I strive to put my hand upon the Scapegoats head and labor to believe that my sins are transferred to Him, some demon seems to stop the breath that would breathe itself forth in adoration and something checks the hand that would lay itself upon the Head that died for me. Well, poor Soul, you are indeed far from God. I will repeat the words of the text to you. May the Holy Spirit repeat them in your ear! When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. So shall it be with you if you have come thus far, though great may be the distance. Your feet shall not have to travel it but God the Eternal One shall from His throne look down and visit your poor heart though now you tarry by the way afraid to approach Him.

II. Our second point is the PECULIAR TROUBLES which agitate the breasts of those who are in this position. Let us introduce to you the poor ragged prodigal. After a life of ease, he is by his own vice plunged into penury and labor. After feeding swine for a time and being almost starved, he sets about returning to his fathers house. It is a long and weary journey. He walks many a mile until his feet are sore and at last from the summit of a mountain he views his fathers house far away in the plain. There are yet many miles between him and his father whom he has neglected. Can you conceive his emotions when for the first time after so long an absence he sees the old house at home?

He remembers it well in the distance, for though it is long since he trod its floors he has never ceased to remember it. And the remembrance of his fathers kindness and of his own prosperity when he was with him has never yet been erased from his consciousness. You would imagine that for one moment he feels a flash of joy, like some flash of lightning in the midst of the tempest, but a black darkness comes over his spirit. In the first place, it is probable he will think, Oh, suppose I could reach my home, will my father receive me? Will he not shut the door in my face and tell me to be gone and spend the rest of my life where I have been spending the first of it?

Then another suggestion might arise: Surely, the demon that led me first astray may lead me back again before I salute my parent. Or maybe, he thinks, I may even die upon the road and so before I have received my fathers blessing my soul may stand before its God. I doubt not each of these three thoughts have crossed your mind if you are now in the position of one who is seeking Christ but mourns to feel himself far away from Him.

First, you have been afraid lest you should die before Christ has appeared to you. You have been for months seeking the Savior without finding Him and now the black thought comes, And what if I should die with all these prayers unanswered? Oh, if He would but hear me before I departed this world I would be content, though He should keep me waiting in anguish for many years. But what if before tomorrow morning I should be a corpse? At my bed I kneel tonight and cry for mercy. Oh, if He should not send the pardon before tomorrow morning and in the night my spirit should stand before His bar!What then? It is singular that other men think they shall live forever, but men convinced of sin, who seek a Savior, are afraid they shall not live another moment.

You have known the time dear, Christian Brothers and Sisters, when you dared not shut your eyes for fear you should not open them again on earth. When you dreaded the shadows of the night lest they should darken forever the light of the sun and you should dwell in outer darkness throughout eternity. You have mourned as each day has entered and you have wept as it has departed because you fancied that your next step might precipitate you into your eternal doom. I have known what it is to tread the earth and fear lest every tuft of grass should but cover a door to Helllest every particle and every atom and every stone should be so at league with God against me as to destroy me.

John Bunyan says that at one time in his experience he felt that he had rather have been born a dog or a toad than a man. He felt so unutterably wretched on account of sin. And his great point of wretchedness was the fact that though he had been three years seeking Christ, he might after all die without finding Him. And in Truth this is no needless alarm. It may be, perhaps, too alarming to some who already feel their need of Christ but the mass of us need perpetually to be startled with the thought of death.

How few of you ever indulge that thought! Because you live and are in health and eat and drink and sleep, you think you shall not die. Do you ever soberly look at your last end? Do you ever, when you come to your beds at night, think how one day you shall undress for the last slumber? And when you wake in the morning, do you ever think that the trump of the archangel shall startle you to appear before God in the last day of the great assize, wherein an universe shall stand before the Judge? No. All men think all men mortal but themselves. And thoughts of death we still push off until at last we shall find ourselves waking up in Hellwhere to wake is to wake too late.

But you to whom I specially speak this morning, you who feel that you are a great way off from Christyou shall never die, but live! And you shall declare the works of the Lord if you have really sought Him. You shall never die until you have found Him. There was never a soul yet that sincerely sought the Savior who perished before he found Him. No, the gates of death shall never shut on you till the gates of Grace have opened for you. Till Christ has washed your sins away you shall never be baptized in Jordans flood. Your life is secure, for this is Gods constant planHe keeps His own elect alive till the day of His grace and then He takes them to Himself. And inasmuch as you know your need of a Savior, you are

one of His and you shall never die until you have found Him. Your second fear is, Ah, Sir, I am not afraid of dying before I find   
Christ. I have a worse fear than that. I have had convictions before and   
they have often passed awaymy greatest fear today is that these will be   
the same. I have heard of a poor coal miner, who on one occasion, having   
been deeply impressed under a sermon, was led to repent of sin and forsake his former life. But he felt so great a horror of ever returning to his   
former conversation that one day he knelt down and cried thus unto God,   
O Lord, let me die on this spot rather than ever deny the religion which I   
have espoused and turn back to my former conversation. And we are   
credibly told that he died on that very spot and so his prayer was answered.   
God had rather take Him home to Heaven than suffer Him to bear the   
brunt of temptation on earth. Now, when men come to Christ, they feel   
that they had rather suffer anything than lose their convictions. Scores of  
times have you and I been drawn to Christ under the preaching of the   
Word. We can look back upon dozens of occasions on which it seemed   
just the turning point with us. Something said in our hearts, Now, believe   
in Christ. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. But we   
said, Tomorrow, tomorrow. And when tomorrow came our convictions  
were gone.   
We thought what we said yesterday would be the deed of today but instead of it, the procrastination of yesterday became the hardened wickedness of today. We wandered farther from God and forgot Him. Now you are   
crying to Him for fear lest He should give you up again. You have this   
morning prayed before you came here and you said, Father, suffer not   
my companions to laugh me out of my religion. Let not my worldly business so engross my thoughts as to prevent my due attention to the matters of another world. Oh, let not the trifles of today so absorb my   
thoughts that I may not be preparing myself to meet my God *Deeply on my thoughtful heart,   
Eternal things impress,*   
and make this a real saving work that shall never die out, nor be taken   
from me.   
Is that your earnest prayer? O poor Prodigal, it shall be heard! It shall  
be answered. You shall not have time to go back. Today your Father views   
you from His throne in Heaven. Today He runs to you in the message of   
His Gospel. Today He falls upon your neck and weeps for joy. Today He   
says to you, Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven. Today, by the   
preaching of the Word He bids you come and reason with Him, for  
though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool, though they are red   
like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.   
But the last and the most prominent thought which I suppose the   
prodigal would have, would be that when he did get to his father, his father would say to him, Get along with you, I will have nothing more to do   
with you. Ah, thought he to himself, I remember the morning when I  
rose up before daybreak because I knew I could not stand my mothers  
tears. I remember how I crept down the back staircase and took all the   
money with me. How I stole down the yard and ran away into the land   
where I spent my all. Oh, what will the old gentleman say of me when I   
come back? Why, there he is! He is running to me. But he has got a   
horsewhip with him, to be sure, to whip me away. It is not at all possible   
that if he comes he will have a kind word for me, is it? The most I can expect is that he will say, Well John, you have wasted all your money, you   
cannot expect me to do anything for you again. I wont let you starve. You   
shall be one of my servants. There, come, I will take you as footman. And   
if he will do that I will be obliged to him. No, that is the very thing I will   
ask of him, I will say, Make me as one of your hired servants. Oh, said the devil within him your father will never speak comfortably to youyou had better run away again. I tell you if he gets near you,  
you will have such a dressing as you ever received in your life. You will die   
with a broken heart. You will very likely fall dead herethe old man will   
never bury youthe carrion crows will eat you. There is no hope for you  
see how you have treated him. Put yourself in his place. What would you   
do if you had a son that had run away with half your living and spent it  
upon harlots? And the son thought if he were in his fathers place he  
should be very harsh and severe. And possibly, he almost turned upon his   
heel to run away.   
But he had no time to do that. When he was just thinking about running away, on a sudden his fathers arms were about his neck and he had   
received the paternal kiss. No, before he could get his whole prayer finished he was arrayed in a white robe, the best in the house. And they had   
brought him to the table and the fatted calf was being killed for his repast.  
And poor Soul, it shall be so with you. You say, If I go to God, He will  
never receive me. I am too vile and wretchedothers He may have pressed   
to His heart, but He will not me. If my brother should go, he might be   
saved but there are such aggravations in my crime, I have grown so cold  
since. I have done such a deal of mischief. I have so often blasphemed   
Him, so frequently broken His Sabbaths.   
Ah, and I have so often deceived Him. I have promised I would repent  
and when I have got well I have lied to God and gone back to my old sin.   
Oh, if He would but let me creep inside the door of Heaven! I will not ask  
to be one of His children. I will only ask that He will let me be where the  
Syrophenician woman desired to beto be a dog, to eat the crumbs that   
fall from the Masters table. That is all I ask. And oh, if He will but grant it   
to me, He shall never hear the last of it, for as long as I live I will sing His   
praise. And when the world does fade away and the sun grow dim with  
age, my gratitude, immortal as my soul, shall never cease to sing His love,   
who pardoned my grossest sins and washed me in His blood. It shall be so. Come and try. Now, Sinners, dry your tears. Let hopeless sorrows cease. Look to the wounds of Christ who died. Let all your griefs now be removed. There is no further cause for themyour Father loves you. He   
accepts and receives you to His heart.   
III. Now, in conclusion, I may notice HOW THESE FEARS WERE MET   
IN THE PRODIGALS CASE and how they shall be met in ours if we are in  
the same condition. The text says, The Father saw him. Yes and God   
saw you just now. That tear which was wiped away so hastilyas if you   
were ashamed of itGod saw it and He stored it in His bottle. That prayer  
which you did breathe just a few moments ago, so faintly and with such  
little faithGod heard it. The other day you were in your chamber, where   
no ear heard you. But God was there. Sinner, let this be your comfort,   
that God sees you when you begin to repent. He does not see you with His   
usual gaze with which He looks on all men, but He sees you with an eye of  
intense interest.   
He has been looking on you in all your sin and in all your sorrow, hoping that you would repent. And now He sees the first gleam of grace and   
He beholds it with joy. Never wanderer on the lonely castle top saw the   
first gray light of morning with more joy than that with which God beholds   
the first desire in your heart. Never physician rejoiced more when he saw   
the first heaving of the lungs in one that was supposed to be dead, than   
God does rejoice over you now that He sees the first token for good. Think   
not that you are despised and unknown and forgotten. He is marking you   
from His high throne in Glory and rejoicing in what He sees. He saw you   
pray, He heard you groan, He marked your tear. He looked upon you and   
rejoiced to see that these were the first seeds of grace in your heart. And then, the text says, He had compassion on him. He did not  
merely see him, but he wept within himself to think he should be in such  
a condition. The old father had a very long range of eyesight. And though   
the prodigal could not see him in the distance, he could see the prodigal.  
And the fathers first thought when he saw him was thisO my poor Son!   
O my poor boy! That ever he should have brought himself into such a   
state as this! He looked through his telescope of love and he saw him and   
said, Ah, he did not go out of my house in such trim as that. Poor creature, his feet are bleeding. He has come a long way. Look at his face. He  
doesnt look like the same boy that he was when he left me. His eyes that  
were so bright is now sunken in its socket. His cheeks that once stood out  
with fatness, have now become hollow with famine. Poor wretch, I can see   
all his bones, he is so emaciated.   
Instead of feeling any anger in his heart, he felt just the contrary. He   
felt such pity for his poor son. And that is how the Lord feels for youyou   
that are groaning and moaning on account of sin. He forgets your sins. He   
only weeps to think you should have brought yourself to be what you are.  
Why did you rebel against Me and bring yourself into such a state as   
this? It was just like that day when Adam sinned. God walked in the garden and He missed Adam. He did not cry out, Adam, come here and be  
judged. Nowith a soft, sorrowful and plaintive voice, He said, Adam,   
where are you? Oh, my fair Adam, you whom I made so happy, where are

you now? Oh Adam! You did think to become a God. Where are you now?  
You have walked with Me. Do you hide yourself from your Friend? Little   
do you know! Oh Adam, what woes you have brought on yourself and   
your offspring. Adam, where are you?   
And Jehovahs heart yearns today over you. He is not angry with you.  
His anger is passed away and His hands are stretched out still. Inasmuch   
as He has brought you to feel that you have sinned against Him and to  
desire reconciliation with Him there is now no wrath in His heart. The   
only sorrow that He feels is sorrow that you should have brought yourself   
into a state so mournful as that in which you now are found. But He did not stop in mere compassion. Having had compassion, He   
ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. This you do not understand yet.  
But you shall. As sure as God is God if you this day are seeking Him   
aright through Christ, the day shall come when the kiss of full assurance   
shall be on your lipswhen the arms of sovereign love shall embrace you   
and you shall know it to be so. You may have despised Him, but you shall  
know Him yet to be your Father and your Friend. You may have scoffed   
His name. You shall one day come to rejoice in it as better than pure gold.   
You may have broken His Sabbaths and despised His Wordthe day is   
coming when the Sabbath shall be your delight and His Word your treasure. Yes, marvel not. You may have plunged into the kennel of sin and   
made your clothes black with iniquity. But you shall one day stand before  
His Throne white as the angels are. And that tongue that once cursed Him   
shall yet sing His praise.   
If you are a real seeker, the hands that have been stained with lust  
shall one day grasp the harp of gold and the head that has plotted against  
the Most High shall yet be girt with gold. Seems it not a strange thing that  
God should do so much for sinners? But strange though it seem, it shall  
be strangely true. Look at the staggering drunkard in the ale-house. Is   
there a possibility that one day he shall stand amongst the fairest sons of  
light? Possibility? Yes, certainty, if he repents and turns from the error of   
his ways. Hear yonder curser and swearer? See the man who labels himself as a servant of Hell and is not ashamed to do so? Is it possible that he   
shall one day share the bliss of the redeemed? Possible?! Yes, moreit is   
sureif he turns, by Gods grace, from his evil ways. O Sovereign Grace,  
turn men that they may repent! Turn you, turn you, why will you die, O   
house of Israel?   
*Lord do You the sinner turn,   
For Your tender mercies sake!*   
One word or so and I have done. If any of you today are under conviction of sin, let me solemnly warn you not to frequent places where those   
convictions are likely to be destroyed. A correspondent of the New York Christian Advocate furnishes the following affecting narrativeWhen I was traveling in the state of Massachusetts twenty-six years ago, after preaching one evening in the town of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a very serious-looking young man arose and wished to address the assembly. After obtaining leave, he spoke as followsMy friends, about one year ago, I set out in company with a young man of my intimate acquaintance to seek the salvation of my soul. For several weeks we went on together. We labored   
together and often renewed our covenant never to give over seeking till we   
obtained the religion of Jesus.   
But all at once, the young man neglected attending meetings, appeared to turn his back on all the means of grace and grew so shy of me   
that I could scarcely get an opportunity to speak with him. His strange  
conduct gave me much painful anxiety of mind. But still I felt resolved to   
obtain the salvation of my soul or perish, making the publicans plea. After a few days a friend informed me that my young companion had received an invitation to attend a ball and was determined to go. I went immediately to him and, with tears in my eyes, endeavored to persuade him   
to change his purpose and to go with me on that evening to a Prayer Meeting. I pleaded with him in vain. He told me, when we parted, that I must   
not give him up as lost, for after he had attended that ball, he intended to  
make a business of seeking religion.   
The appointed evening came and he went to the ball and I went to the   
Prayer Meeting. Soon after the meeting opened, it pleased God, in answer   
to my prayer, to turn my spiritual captivity and make my soul rejoice in   
His justifying love. Soon after the ball opened my young friend was standing at the head of the ballroom, with the hand of a young lady in his   
hand, preparing to lead the dance. And, while the musician was turning  
his violin, without one moments warning, the young man sallied back  
and fell dead on the floor. I was immediately sent for to assist in devising  
means to convey his remains to his fathers house. You will be better able   
to judge what were the emotions of my heart, when I tell you that that   
young man was my own brother.   
Trifle not, then, with your convictions, for eternity shall be too short for   
you to utter your lamentations over such trifling.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2236 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRODIGAL LOVE FOR THE PRODIGAL SON   
NO. 2236

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 27, 1891,   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MARCH 29, 1891.

**And kissed him.   
Luke 15:20.**

IN the Revised Version, if you will kindly look at the margin, you will find that the text there reads, and kissed him much. This is a very good translation of the Greek which might bear the meaning, Kissed him earnestly, or, Kissed him eagerly, or, Kissed him often. I prefer to have it in very plain language and, therefore, adopt the marginal reading of the Revised Version, Kissed him much, as the text of my sermon, the subject of which will be the overflowing love of God toward the returning sinner.

The first word, and, links us on to all that had gone before. The parable is a very familiar one, yet it is so full of sacred meaning that it always has some fresh lesson for us. Let us, then, consider the preliminaries to this kissing. On the sons side, there was something, and on the fathers side, much more. Before the prodigal son received these kisses of love, he had said in the far country, I will arise and go to my father. He had, however, done more than that, otherwise his fathers kiss would never have been upon his cheek. The resolve had become a deedHe arose, and came to his father. A bushel full of resolutions is of small valuea single grain of practice is worth the whole. The determination to return home is good, but it is when the wandering boy begins the business of really carrying out the good resolve that he draws near the blessing. If any of you here present have long been saying, I will repent. I will turn to God, leave off resolving and come to practicing! And may God, in His mercy, lead you both to repent and to believe in Christ!

Before the kisses of love were given, this young man was on his way to his father, but he would not have reached him unless his father had come the major part of the way. When you give God an inch, He will give you a mile. If you come a little way to Him, when you are yet a great way off He will run to meet you. I do not know that the prodigal saw his father, but his father saw him. The eyes of mercy are quicker than the eyes of repentance. Even the eyes of our faith are dim compared with the eyes of Gods love. He sees a sinner long before a sinner sees Him!

I do not suppose that the prodigal traveled very fast. I should imagine that he came very slowly   
*With heavy heart and downcast eye,   
With many a sob and many a sigh.*

He was resolved to come, yet he was half afraid. But we read that his father ran. Slow are the steps of repentance, but swift are the feet of forgiveness! God can run where we can scarcely limp and if we are limping towards Him, He will run towards us. These kisses were given in a hurry. The story is narrated in a way that almost makes us realize that such was the casethere is a sense of haste in the very wording of it. His father ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed himkissed him eagerly! He did not delay a moment, for though he was out of breath, he was not out of love. He fell on his neck, and kissed him much. There stood his son ready to confess his sintherefore did his father kiss him all the more. The more willing you are to acknowledge your sin, the more willing is God to forgive you. When you make a clean breast of it, God will soon make a clear record of it. He will wipe out the sin that you willingly acknowledge and humbly confess before Him. He that was willing to use his lips for confession found that his father was willing to use his lips for kissing him!

See the contrast. There is the son, scarcely daring to think of embracing his father, yet his father has scarcely seen him before he has fallen on his neck! The condescension of God towards penitent sinners is very great. He seems to stoop from His Throne of Glory to fall upon the neck of a repentant sinner. God on the neck of a sinner! What a wonderful picture! Can you conceive it? I do not think you can, but if you cannot imagine it, I hope that you will realize it. When Gods arm is about our neck, and His lips are on our cheek, kissing us much, then we understand more than preachers or books can ever tell us of His condescending love!

The father saw his son. There is a great deal in that word, saw. He saw who it was. He saw where he had come from. He saw the swineherds dress. He saw the filth upon his hands and feet. He saw his rags, saw his penitent look, saw what he had been, saw what he was and saw what he would soon be. His father saw him. God has a way of seeing men and women that you and I cannot understand. He sees right through us at a glance, as if we were made of glass. He sees all our past, present and future.

When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him. It was not with icy eyes that the father looked on his returning son. Love leaped into them and as he beheld him, he, had compassion on him. That is, he felt for him. There was no anger in his heart towards his son. He had nothing but pity for his poor boy who had got into such a pitiable condition. It was true that it was all his own fault, but that did not come before his fathers mind. It was the state that he was inhis poverty, his degradationthat pale face of his so wan with hunger that touched his father to the quick. And God has compassion on the woes and miseries of men. They may have brought their troubles on themselves and they have, indeed, done so. But, nevertheless, God has compassion upon them. It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

We read that the father, ran. The compassion of God is followed by swift movements. He is slow to anger, but He is quick to bless. He does not take any time to consider how He shall show His love to penitent prodigalsthat was all done long ago in the Eternal Covenant. He has no need to prepare for their return to Himthat was all done on Calvary. God comes flying in the greatness of His compassion to help every poor penitent soul

*On cherub and on cherubim,   
Full royally He rode!   
And on the wings of mighty winds   
Came flying all abroad.*

And when He comes, He comes to kiss! Master Trapp says that if we had read that the father had kicked his prodigal son, we should not have been very much astonished. Well, I would have been very greatly astonished, seeing that the father in the parable was to represent God! But still, his son deserved all the rough treatment that some heartless men might have given and, had the story been only that of a selfish human father, it might have been written that, as he was coming near, his father ran at him and kicked him. There are such fathers in the world, who seem as if they cannot forgive. If he had kicked him, it would have been no more than he had deserved. But no, what is written in the Bible stands true for all time and for every sinnerHe fell on his neck, and kissed himkissed him eagerly, kissed him much!

What does this much kissing mean? It signifies that when sinners come to God, He gives them a loving reception and a hearty welcome. If any of you, while I am speaking, shall come to God, expecting mercy because of the great Sacrifice of Christ, this shall be true of you as it has been true of many of usHe kissed him much.

I. First, this much kissing means MUCH LOVE. It means much love truly felt, for God never gives an expression of love without feeling it in His infinite heart. God will never give a Judas kiss and betray those whom He embraces. There is no hypocrisy with GodHe never kisses those for whom He has no love. Oh, how God loves sinners! You who repent and come to Him will discover how greatly He loves you! There is no measuring the love He bears towards you. He has loved you from before the foundation of the world and He will love you when time shall be no more! Oh, the immeasurable love of God to sinners who come and cast themselves upon His mercy!

This much kissing also means much love manifested. Gods people do not always know the greatness of His love to them. Sometimes, however, it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. Some of us know, at times, what it is to be almost too happy to live! The love of God has been so overpoweringly experienced by us on some occasions that we have almost had to ask for a stay of the delight because we could not endure any more! If the Glory had not been veiled a little, we would have died of excess of rapture, or happiness! Beloved, God has wondrous ways of opening His peoples hearts to the manifestation of His Grace. He can pour in, not now and then a drop of His love, but great and mighty streams! Madame Guyon used to speak of the torrents of love that come swooping through the spirit, bearing all before them. The poor prodigal in the parable had so much love manifested to him that he might have sung of the torrents of his fathers affection. That is the way God receives those whom He saves, giving them not a meager measure of Grace, but manifesting an overflowing love!

This much kissing means, further, much love perceived. When his father kissed him much, the poor prodigal knew, if never before, that his father loved him. He had no doubt about it. He had a clear perception of it. It is very frequently the case that the first moment a sinner believes in Jesus, he gets this much love. God reveals it to him and he perceives it and enjoys it at the very beginning. Think not that God always keeps the best wine for the lastHe gives us some of the richest dainties of His table the first moment we sit there! I remember the joy that I had when first I believed in Jesus and, even now, in looking back upon it, the memory of it is as fresh as if it were but yesterday! Oh, I could not have believed that a mortal could be so happy after having been so long burdened and so terribly cast down! I did but look to Jesus on the Cross and the crushing load was immediately goneand the heart which could only sigh and cry by reason of its burden, began to leap and dance and sing for joy! I had found in Christ all that I needed and I rested in the love of God at once. So may it be with you, also, if you will but return to God through Christ. It shall be said of you as of this prodigal, The father saw him and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him in much love.

II. Secondly, this much kissing means MUCH FORGIVENESS. The prodigal had many sins to confess, but before he came to the details of them, his father had forgiven him. I love confession of sin after forgiveness. Some suppose that after we are forgiven we are never to confess, but, oh, Beloved, it is then that we confess most truly because we know the guilt of sin most really! Then do we plaintively sing

*My sins, my sins, my Savior,   
How sad on You they fall!   
Seen through Your gentle patience,   
I tenfold feel them all.   
I know they are forgiven,   
But still their pain to me   
Is all the grief and anguish   
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.*

To think that Christ should have washed me from my sins in His own blood makes me feel my sin the more keenly and confess it the more humbly before God. The picture of this prodigal is marvelously true to the experience of those who return to God. His father kissed him with the kiss of forgiveness and yet, after that, the young man went on to say, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son. Do not hesitate, then, to acknowledge your sin to God, even though you know that in Christ it is all put away!

From this point of view, those kisses meant, first, Your sin is all gone and will never be mentioned any more. Come to My heart, My son! You have grieved Me sorely and angered Me, but, as a thick cloud, I have blotted out your transgressions and as a cloud, your sins.

As the father looked upon him and kissed him much, there probably came another kiss which seemed to say, There is no soreness leftI have not only forgiven, but I have forgotten, too. It is all gone, clean gone! I will never accuse you of it any more. I will never love you any the less. I will never treat you as though you were still an unworthy and untrustworthy person. Probably at that there came another kiss, for do not forgot that his father forgave him, and kissed him much, to show that the sin was all forgiven.

There stood the prodigal, overwhelmed by his fathers goodness, yet remembering his past life. As he looked on himself, and thought, I still have these old rags on and I have just come from feeding the swine, I can imagine that his father would give him another kiss, as much as to say, My boy, I do not remember the past. I am so glad to see you that I do not see any filth on you, or any rags on you, either. I am so delighted to have you with me once more that as I would pick up a diamond out of the mire and be glad to get the diamond, again, so do I pick you up, you are so precious to me. This is the gracious and glorious way in which God treats those who return to Him. As for their sin, He has put it away so that He will not remember it. He forgives like a God! Well may we adore and magnify His matchless mercy as we sing

*In wonder lost, with trembling joy   
We take the pardon of our God!   
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,   
A pardon bought with Jesus blood.   
Who is pardoning God like Thee?   
Or who has Grace so rich and free?*

Well, asks one, can such a wonderful change ever take place with me? By the Grace of God it may be experienced by every person who is willing to return to God! I pray God that it may happen now and that you may get such assurance of it from the Word of God, by the power of His Holy Spirit, and from a sight of the precious blood of Christ shed for your redemption, that you may be able to say, I understand it now! I see how He kisses all my sins away and when it rises, He kisses it away again! And when I think of it with shame, He gives me another kiss. And when I blush all over at the remembrance of my evil deeds, He kisses me again and again, to assure me that I am fully and freely forgiven. Thus the many kisses from the prodigals father combined to make his wayward son feel that his sin was, indeed, all gone. They revealed much love and much forgiveness.

III. These repeated kisses meant, next, FULL RESTORATION. The prodigal was going to say to his father, Make me as one of your hired servants. In the far country he had resolved to make that request, but his father, with a kiss, stopped him. By that kiss, his sonship was acknowledged. By it the father said to the wretched wanderer, You are my son. He gave him such a kiss as he would only give to his own son. I wonder how many here have ever given such a kiss to anyone. There sits one who knows something of such kisses as the prodigal received. That fathers girl went astray and, after years of sin, she came back worn out, to die at home. He received her, found her penitent and gladly welcomed her to his house. Ah, my dear Friend, you know something about such kisses as those!

And you, good woman, whose boy ran away, you can understand something about these kisses, too. He left you and you did not hear from him for years. And he went on in a very vicious course of life. When you did hear from him, it well-near broke your heart. And when he came back, you hardly knew him. Do you recollect how you took him in? You felt that you wished that he was the little boy you used to press to your bosom, but now he was grown up to be a big man and a great sinneryet you gave him such a kiss and repeated your welcome so often that he will never forget it, nor will you forget it either. You can understand that this overwhelming greeting was like the father saying, My boy, you are my son. Despite all that you have done, you belong to me. However far you have gone in vice and folly, I love you. You are bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. In this parable Christ would have you know, poor Sinner, that God will acknowledge you if you come to Him confessing your sin through Jesus Christ. He will gladly receive you, for all things are ready against the day that you return

*Spread for you the festal board,   
See with richest dainties stored.   
To your Fathers bosom pressed,   
Yet again a child confessed.   
Never from his house to roam,   
Come and welcome, sinner, come.*

The father received his son with many kisses and so proved that his prayer was answered. Indeed, his father heard his prayer before he offered it! He was going to say, Father, I have sinned, and to ask for forgiveness, but he got the mercy, and a kiss to seal it, before the prayer was presented! This also shall be true of you, O Sinner, who are returning to your God through Jesus Christ! You shall be permitted to pray and God will answer you. Hear it, poor, despairing Sinner, whose prayer has seemed to be shut out from Heaven! Come to your Fathers bosom, right now, and He will hear your prayers and, before many days are over, you shall have the clearest proofs that you are fully restored to the Divine favor by answers to your intercessions that shall make you marvel at the Lords loving kindness to you!

Further than this, you shall have all your privileges restored, even as this wandering young man was put among the children when he returned. As you see him now in the fathers house, where he was received with the many kisses, he wears a sons robe, the family ring is on his finger and the shoes of the home are on his feet. He eats no longer swines food, but childrens bread! Even thus shall it be with you if you return to God! Though you look so foul and so vileand really are even more defiled than you lookand though you smell so strongly of the hogs among which you have been living that some peoples nostrils would turn up at you, your Father will not notice these marks of your occupation in the far country with all its horrible defilement! See how this father treats his boy. He kisses him and, kisses him again, because he knows his own child and, recognizing him as his child, and feeling his fatherly heart yearning over him, he gives him kiss after kiss. He kisses him much to make him know that he has full restoration.

In this repeated kissing we see, then, these three thingsmuch love, much forgiveness and full restoration.

IV. But these many kisses meant even more than this. They revealed his fathers EXCEEDING JOY. The fathers heart is overflowing with gladness and he cannot restrain his delight. I think he must have shown his joy by a repeated look. I will tell you the way I think the father behaved towards his son who had been dead, but was alive again, who had been lost, but was found. Let me try to describe the scene. The father has kissed his son and he bids him sit down. Then he comes in front of him and looks at him, and feels so happy that he says, I must give you another kiss. Then he walks away a minute, but he is back again before long, saying to himself, Oh, I must give him another kiss! He gives him another, for he is so happy. His heart beats fast. He feels very joyful. The old man would like the music to strike up. He wants to be at the dancing, but meanwhile he satisfies himself by a repeated look at his long-lost child. Oh, I believe that God looks at the sinner and looks at him again, and keeps on looking at him, all the while delighting in the very sight of him, when he is truly repentant, and comes back to his Fathers house!

The repeated kiss meant, also, a repeated blessing, for every time he put his arms round him, and kissed him, he kept saying, Bless you, oh, bless you, my boy! He felt that his son had brought a blessing to him by coming back and he invoked fresh blessings upon his head. Oh, Sinner, if you did but know how God would welcome you and how He would look at you, and how He would bless you, surely you would at once repent and come to His arms and heartand find yourself happy in His love!

The many kisses meant, also, repeated delight. It is a very wonderful thing that it should be in the power of a sinner to make God glad. He is the happy God, the Source and Spring of all happinesswhat can we add to His blessedness? And yet, speaking after the manner of men, Gods highest joy lies in clasping His willful Ephraims to His breast, when He has heard them bemoaning themselves, and has seen them arising and returning to their home! God grant that He may see that sight, even now, and have delight because of sinners returning to Himself! Yes, we believe it shall be so because of His Presence with us and because of the gracious working of the Holy Spirit! Surely that is the teaching of the Prophets wordsThe 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. Think of the eternal God singing and remember that it is because a wandering sinner has returned to Him that He sings! He joys in the return of the prodigal and all Heaven shares in His joy!

V. I have not got through my subject yet. As we take a fifth look, we find that these many kisses mean OVERFLOWING COMFORT. This poor young man, in his hungry, faint and wretched state, having come a very long way, had not much heart in him. His hunger had taken all energy out of him and he was so conscious of his guilt that he had hardly the courage to face his father. So his father gives him a kiss, as much as to say, Come, boy, do not be cast down; I love you.

Oh, the past, the past, my Father! he might moan, as he thought of his wasted years. But he had no sooner said that than he received another kiss, as if his father said, Never mind the past. I have forgotten all about that. This is the Lords way with His saved ones. Their past lies hidden under the blood of Atonement. The Lord says by His servant, Jeremiah, The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

But then, perhaps, the young man looked down on his foul garments and said, the present, my Father, the present, what a dreadful state I am in! And with another kiss would come the answer, Never mind the present, my Boy. I am content to have you as you are. I love you. This, too, is Gods word to those who are accepted in the Beloved. In spite of all their vileness, they are pure and spotless in Christ, and God says of each one of them, Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you. Therefore, though in yourself you are unworthy, through My dear Son you are welcome to My home.

Oh, but, the boy might have said, the future, my Father, the future! What would you think if I should go astray again? Then would come another holy kiss and his father would say, I will see to the future, my Boy. I will make home so bright for you that you will never want to go away again. But God does more than that for us when we return to Him. He not only surrounds us with tokens of His love, but He says, concerning us, They shall be My people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Furthermore, He says to each returning one, 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. 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.

Whatever there was to trouble the son, the father gave him a kiss to set it all right and, in like manner, our God has a love token for every time of doubt and dismay which may come to His reconciled sons. Perhaps one whom I am addressing says, Even though I confess my sin and seek Gods mercy, I shall still be in sore trouble, for through my sin I have brought myself down to poverty. There is a kiss for you, says the Lord Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure. But I have even brought disease upon myself by sin, says another. There is a kiss for you, for I am Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord that heals you, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases. But I am dreadfully down at the heel, says another. The Lord gives you, also, a kiss, and says, I will lift you up and provide for all your needs. No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly. All the promises in this Book belong to every repentant sinner who returns to God believing in Jesus Christ, His Son!

The father of the prodigal kissed his son much and thus made him feel happy then and there. Poor souls, when they come to Christ, are in a dreadful plight, and some of them hardly know where they are. I have known them talk a lot of nonsense in their despair and say hard and wicked things of God in their dreadful doubt. The Lord gives no answer to all that except a kiss, and then another kiss! Nothing puts the penitent so much at rest as the Lords repeated assurance of His unchanging love. Such a one the Lord has often received, and kissed him much, that He might fetch him up, even, from the horrible pit and set his feet upon a rock and establish his goings. The Lord grant that many whom I am addressing may understand what I am talking about!

VI. And now for our sixth head, though you will think I am getting to be like the old Puritans with these many heads. But I cannot help it, for these many kisses had many meaningslove, forgiveness, restoration, joy, comfortwere in them and, also, STRONG ASSURANCE.

The father kissed his son much to make him quite certain that it was all real. The prodigal, in receiving those many kisses, might say to himself, All this love must be true, for a little while ago I heard the hogs grunt and now I hear nothing but the kisses from my dear fathers lips. So his father gave him another kiss, for there was no way of convincing him that the first was real like repeating itand if there lingered any doubt about the second, the father gave him yet a third. If, when the dream of old was doubled, the interpretation was surethese repeated kisses left no room for doubt! The father renewed the tokens of his love that his son might be fully assured of its reality.

He did it that in the future it might never be questioned. Some of us were brought so low before we were converted that God gave us an excess of joy when He saved us, that we might never forget it. Sometimes the devil says to me, You are no child of God. I have long ago given up answering him, for I find that it is a waste of time to argue with such a crafty old liar as he ishe knows too much for me. But if I must answer him, I say, Why, I remember when I was saved by the Lord! I can never forget even the very spot of ground where first I saw my Saviorthen and there my joy rolled in like some great Atlantic billow and burst in mighty foam of bliss, covering all things. I cannot forget it. That is an argument which even the devil cannot answer, for he cannot make me believe that such a thing never happened. The Father kissed me much and I remember it full well. The Lord gives to some of us such a clear deliverance, such a bright, sunshiny day at our conversion, that, from that day, forward, we cannot question our state before Him but must believe that we are eternally saved!

The father put the assurance of this poor returning prodigal beyond all doubt. If the first kisses were given privately, when only the father and son were present, it is quite certain that, afterwards, he kissed him before men, where others could see him. He kissed him much in the presence of the household, that they, also, might not be calling in question that he was his fathers child. It was a pity that the elder brother was not also there. You see he was away in the fields. He was more interested in the crops than in the reception of his brother. I have known such a one in modern days. He was a man who did not come out to weekly evening services. He was such a man of business that he did not come out on a Thursday night and the prodigal came home at such a timeand so the elder brother did not see the father receive him. If he lived now, he would probably not come to the Church Meetingshe would be too busy. So he would not get to know about the reception of penitent sinners. But the father, when he received that son of his, intended all to know, once and for all, that he was, indeed, his child! Oh, that you might get those many kisses even now! If they are given to you, you will have, for the rest of your life, strong assurance derived from the happiness of your first days.

VII. I have done when I have said that I think that here we have a specimen of the INTIMATE COMMUNION which the Lord often gives to sinners when they first come to Him. His father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him much.

You see, this was before the family fellowship. Before the servants had prepared the meal, before there had been any music or dancing in the family, his father kissed him. He would have cared little for all their songs and have valued but slightly his reception by the servants, if, first of all, he had not been welcomed to his fathers heart. So is it with uswe need first, to have fellowship with God before we think much of union with His people. Before I go to join a Church, I want my Fathers kiss! Before the pastor gives me the right hand of fellowship, I want my heavenly Fathers right hand to welcome me! Before I become recognized by Gods people here below, I want a private recognition from the great Father aboveand that He gives to all who come to Him as the prodigal came to his father. May he give it to some of you now!

This kissing, also, was before the table communion. You know that the prodigal was afterwards to sit at his fathers table and to eat of the fatted calf. But before that, his father kissed him. He would scarcely have been able to sit easily at the feast without the previous kisses of love. The Communion Table to which we are invited is very sweet. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, in symbol, in the ordinance of the Lords Supper, is, indeed, a blessed thing. But I want to have communion with God by the way of the kiss of love before I come there. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. This is something private, ravishing and sweet. God give it to many of you! May you get the many kisses of your Fathers mouth before you come into the Church, or to the Communion Table!

These many kisses, likewise, came before the public rejoicing. The friends and neighbors were invited to share in the feast. But think how shamefaced the son would have been in their presence, if, first of all, he had not found a place in his fathers love, or had not been quite sure of it. He would almost have been inclined to run away again! But the father had kissed him much and so he could meet the curious gaze of old friends with a smiling face until any unkind remarks they might have thought of making died away, killed by his evident joy in his father! It is a hard thing for a man to confess Christ if he has not had an overwhelming sense of communion with Him. But when we are lifted to the skies in the rapture God gives us, it becomes easy, not only to face the world, but to win the sympathy of even those who might have opposed. This is why young converts are frequently used to lead others into the Light of Godthe Lords many kisses of forgiveness have so recently been given to them that their words catch the fragrance of Divine Love as they pass the lips just touched by the Lord. Alas, that any should ever lose their first love and forget the many kisses they have received from their heavenly Father!

Lastly, all this was given before the meeting with the elder brother. If the prodigal son had known what the elder brother thought and said, I would not have wondered at all if he had run off and never come back! He might have come near home, and then, hearing what his brother said, have stolen away again. Yes, but before that could happen, his father had given him the many kisses! Poor Sinner, you have come in here and, perhaps, you have found the Savior. It may be that you will go and speak to some Christian man and he will be afraid to say much to you. I do not wonder that he should doubt you, for you are not, in yourself, as yet a particularly nice sort of person to talk to. But, if you get your Fathers many kisses, you will not mind your elder brother being a little hard on you!

Occasionally I hear of one who wished to join the Church, saying, I came to see the Elders and one of them was rather rough with me. I shall never come again. What a stupid man you must be! Is it not their duty to be a little rough with some of you, lest you should deceive yourselves and be mistaken about your true state? We desire lovingly to bring you to Christ and if we are afraid that you really have not yet come back to God, with penitence and faith, should we not tell you so, like honest men? But suppose that you have really come and your brother is mistakengo and get a kiss from your Father and never mind your brother! He may remind you how you have squandered your living, painting the picture even blacker than it ought to bebut your Fathers kisses will make you forget your brothers frowns!

If you think that in the household of faith you will find everybody amiable, and everyone willing to help you, you will be greatly mistaken. Young Christians are often frightened when they come across some who, from frequent disappointment of their hopes, or from a natural spirit of caution, or perhaps from a lack of spiritual life, receive but coldly those upon whom the Father has lavished much love. If that is your case, never mind these cross-grained elder brothers and sistersget another kiss from your Father! Perhaps the reason it is written, He kissed him much, was because the elder brother, when he came near him, would treat him so coldly and so angrily refuse to join in the feast.

Lord, give to many poor trembling souls the will to come to You! Bring many sinners to Your blessed feet and while they are yet a great way off, run and meet them! Fall on their neck, give them many kisses of love and fill them to the full with heavenly delight, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 15.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK568, 521, 548.

The publishers desire to call special attention to the first sermon in the new volume of The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. It is entitled, Gratitude for Deliverance from the Grave, and is the first sermon that Mr. Spurgeon has been able to revise since his long illness. The text is Psalm 118:17, 18I 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. Both preacher and publisher would be glad if friends who have been profited by reading the sermons would introduce them to others who at present are not acquainted with them.

An Illustrated Catalog of Mr. Spurgeons Works, got up in a most attractive style, has just been issued by Messrs. Passmore & Alabaster, who will, on application, be pleased to forward it, accompanied by a List of Texts and subjects of more than 2,200 Sermons.

END OF VOLUME 37. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #2507 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

HE RAN, AND HE RAN   
NO 2507

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 7, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 2, 1885.

**But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him. Mark 5:6.**

**But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Luke 15:20.**

THESE two texts have a measure of apparent likenessthe man runs to Jesus from afar and the father runs to the prodigal from afar. They both runand when two run to meet each other, they soon meet. When a sinner is running to Christ and the Father is running to the sinner, there shall be a happy meeting before very long, and there shall be joy in Heaven and joy on earth, too! I shall begin my discourse by noticing the case of the demoniac, whose story we readWhen he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him.

I. Using that narrative as a kind of parable, I would remark, in the first place, that we have, here, an emblem OF THE SINNERS PLACE.  
He is afar off from Christ and when, first of all, the Spirit of God begins to open his eyes to his own true condition, one of the chief difficulties in his way is the realization of his distance from the Savior. He begins to cry, Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat! The poor man feels as if there were a great and dreadful distance between him and the great Mediatorhe can only see Jesus afar off, as the demoniac did. He has not yet come to Christ, nor proved His wondrous power to bless.   
I daresay there are some in this congregation who feel that they are afar off from the Lord Jesus Christ and, afar off from the great Father. You are afar off as to character. I am not going to bring an accusation against you, for your own heart and conscience accuse you. It is not necessary for me to describe your past lifeif you are the person whom Christ has come to bless, then I know that your sin is always before you. You cannot hide it from yourself, it seems to be painted on your very eyeballs! You have to look at everything through the mist and haze of your past guilt and, consequently, everything looks dark and dreary to you. The very mercies which God gives you seem to accuse you of your ingratitude to your Benefactor and any denials of mercy, any chastisements that you are enduring, seem to you to be but premonitions of a coming doom, for you feel yourself to be, by your past life, very far off from Christ. He is perfect and you are full of sin! He is just and you are unjust! He is meek and lowlyyou confess that you have been proud and wayward! He is beloved of His Father, the beloved Servant of God, but you have derided Gods Gospel and you have refused to obey Him. You are, indeed, far off from Christ! It seems to you that if Christ and the penitent thief made a pair, then you, also, might make a pair with your dying Savior, but not otherwise. You feel yourself to be unworthy to be in the same world with Him, much less to be in the same Heaven with Him.   
Well, now, when our Lord went to Gadara, as far as I can see, He crossed the Sea of Galilee and endured that storm at night in order that He might heal one manand He went back, again, well content when He had worked that one miracle! It may be that you are a man of that kind, as far off from any likeness to Christ as that poor lunatic was, and He may have come here at this good hour with the intent to save you. At any rate, His servant will go home as grateful as a man can be, if he is but made the means of saving one such sinner as you are. But, first of all, you must realize that this is your positionafar off from Christ as to character.   
But what, perhaps, may appear to you to be even worse is that you seem to be afar off as to any hope of salvation by Christ. It may be that you have long been a hearer of the Gospel. When you were younger, it seemed as if the Kingdom of God had come near to you, but now, the older you grow, the less susceptible you are to holy influences. You used to weep under sermonsyou can more easily sleep under them now! Time was when your rest was broken after some kindly admonition from a Christian friend. But now, perhaps, Christian friends scarcely ever admonish you because you have a sarcastic way of repelling what they say. And even while you are sitting here, you are moaning to yourself, Some in this congregation may be converted, but I shall not be. The Lord Jesus Christ may come here and deliver some poor soul, but assuredly He will not deliver me. I am an off cast and an outcastnot, perhaps, by open sinbut by an inward hardening of my spirit till my soul has become like the northern iron and steel, and nothing can move me. I am far off from any hope that the Savior will ever bless me.   
Well, now, let me say to you, dear Friend, that I am very sorry that it should be so with you, yet am I glad you are here when such a subject as this is being handled, for that Gadarene demoniac seemed to be about as hopeless a man as there was in all the country round about! Apart from Christ, his case was absolutely hopeless. They had, doubtless, used all the arts for the management of lunatics which they understood in those barbarous days, but no chains of iron, nor bands of brass could hold himhe could not be tamed, or kept in check. And yet, O blessed Christ, You could cross the stormy sea at midnight to save this one man! It may be that it is so with you, also, dear Friends, who are so far away from Christ in the misapprehensions of your lack of hope. Yet it may be that this very hour is the time when you are to be set free from the power of the devil and brought to sit at Jesus feet, clothed, and in your right mind!   
Some are also afar off from Christ as to knowledge of Him. They know but little of the Christ of God. They have heard His name. They have some dim notions about Him, but as yet they only see Him afar off. In these days, when the Gospel is preached at so many street corners, and when there is a sanctuary in almost every street, it is astonishing what gross ignorance there is about Him whom to know is life eternalby knowledge of whom many are justified and without knowledge of whom men must perish eternally! O Friends, it is terrible to think that there are persons, well instructed in everything else, who know nothing about this salvation which God has provided for the sons of men! You hear them railing against the Bible and in almost every case the railer has never read the Book! You hear them speak against Christ and it is almost a proverb that those who speak most against Him are ignorant of the common facts of His life. They have not studied His Character, nor have they examined His teaching, yet they cast it all aside as if they were infallible and as if they were qualified to judge and to decide without hearing the case at all! This is a wretched mode of action, yet, if any of you who are here know but little of Christ, for all that I am glad you are here and I only trust that you may be led to do what this poor ignorant demoniac did! Though he must have known very little about Christ, yet he ran to Him and worshipped Him! A little knowledge, like the star of Bethlehem, may suffice to guide to Christ those who are willing to follow its light. A faint gleaming of what Christ is may burn and glow into a more complete and perfect knowledge of Him and by that knowledge you may be brought into the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free.   
I will not keep you longer in describing the sad state of the sinner in being thus far from Christ, except to say that it may be possible that you feel far from Christ because you do not feel as if you could get at Him. You are so unspiritual that you say to yourself, If Christ were on earth, I would walk till I dropped, but I would get to Him. And if I could speak with Him, so that He could hear my words and could answer me with actual vocal soundsif I could see Him and He would look at me, I would spend the last penny I am worth and pass over any length of sea and land if I could but get at Himbut somehow I cannot.   
If it were a matter of touching the hem of His garment with my finger, I would push through the press to do it. If it were a matter of taking Him up in my arms, as Simeon took the young Child Jesus, I would do it, and do it with joy. But I do not know how to get to Himit seems to be all mist and all cloud to me. I know what you mean, dear Friend, for I was in that state, once, and then, indeed, I also saw Jesus afar off, and for a long while I could not get to realize that He was mine. Well, notwithstanding that feeling which possesses you, I shall speak to you, yet further, in the fond hope that you may imitate this poor man who must have been very much like you, only in a worse plight than yours, and it will be my prayer and desire that you may come running to Christ, as he didand that you, also, may worship Him!   
II. Now notice, secondly, THE SINNERS PRIVILEGEHe saw Jesus, though he only saw Him, afar off.   
Those of you who only see Christ in the distance, who do not know much about Him and cannot get at Him, do at least know that there is such a Person! You have heard and it is the best news you ever did hear, that the Son of God came down to live among men and took our flesh, and became Man of the substance of His mother, and though He died upon the Cross, yet He has risen from the dead and He still lives. You have heard tell of all that. You have not thought of it as you ought to have doneyou have not let it weigh upon your heart, or sought to understand all its holy lessonsbut still, you have such a knowledge of Him that you have seen Him afar off.   
More than that, you have heard, and you believe that Jesus has done great things for men. You do not think much about what He has done, but still, it has come to your knowledge that He lived, loved and died that He might save men. You have often heard that on the Cross He made an expiation for human sin. And let me tell you that this is the choicest news you ever heard, or ever will hear! And the day may come when you will look at this Truth of God as the only star of hope in a night which otherwise must be eternal. I hope you will yet clasp that Truth of God to your heart as the brightest jewel and the rarest treasure you have ever met with.

And I believe, further, that some of you have caught the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ is saving other people. You have met with some whom you observe to be very much changed, greatly altered from what they used to be and, though you sometimes laugh at them, yet deep down in your heart you do not really mock themyou wish it were yourself! You have, after all, a respect for any one of these wonderful changes, called conversions, when you see them to be real and genuineand you, perhaps, know some fellows with whom you work and, although you ridicule them, you know that they are better men than they used to beand you admire the change. And there is a feeling in your inmost heart that though you cannot make out the mystery, there is still something in it. Yes, you can see Jesus, though I still grieve to say that you do but see Him afar off. You have, in your heart, some sort of belief that it may be possible that He will yet save you and there is some sort of humble desire in your soul that He will look your way and cast the devils out of you and make you to be His happy servant.   
But, once more, concerning the sinners privilege, Christ has come to the district where he is. It is a horrible country, full of tombs and full of pollutionand the man has made it more horrible by his wildness and his madnessyet there is the Christ, Himself, treading that same Gadarene shore! He who is mighty to save has come into the land of death-shade! He who could cast out devils has come into the devils own territory! He has come to beard the lion in his den. Herein, also, is the privilege of men todaythe Lord Jesus Christ, who made Heaven and earth, is still among usand will be with us to the end of this dispensation. He who could raise the dead and heal the lepers and cast out demons, is still here working by His Spirit! Though corporeally He is gone, yet in efficacious power to save He still lingers among us and His lingering means salvation to all who trust Him! Hear it, O sons of men, and as you hear it, may God bless the message to your souls!   
III. What did this demoniac do when he saw Jesus afar off? That is the point to which we are coming and that will teach us THE SINNERS WISEST COURSEHe ran and worshipped Him.   
I do not know that he did intelligently and after the right manner, worship Christ as the disciples worshipped Him. Perhaps at first, when he was up a hill, howling and cutting himself with stones, he spied a boat come near the shore and he saw a single Stranger coming up from the boat, much as the natives of Erromanga saw John Williams landing on that cannibal shoreand his horrible instinct moved him to fly down at once to the beach, perhaps to attack the Man who dared, in open daylight, intrude on the wild mans domain. But as he approached nearer and nearer to this mysterious Stranger, quite a new feeling came over him. His steps grew slower, his fierce eyes beamed with a duller fire, the beast-like instinct became calm. The ravening wolf, the roaring lion within him began to tremble, for it perceived its Masterand when he had come near enough to get a fuller view of Christ, who stood there in simple majesty, calm and serenethe very opposite of the poor creatures mad furythe man fell down at Jesus feet and worshipped Him.   
Then the devils within him spoke out and, using the mans voice, said, What have I to do with you, Jesus, you Son of the most high God? But for the moment it was the man, and not the devil, who prevailed! For an instant, what little relics there were of manhood made themselves felt and the man fell down and worshipped under the influence of the mysterious Presence of Christ. What I hope and trust may come of our consideration of this subject is that some big sinner here may have a lucid intervalthat some mad sinner here, before the devil can speak, again, may have just a little quiet time, so that, though he may have come in here fresh from all manner of evil, yet for the moment he may feel a solemn calm steal over his spirit, a sacred hush that shall make him quiet as he has not been for many a day. I pray that some strange influence strange to him up to this timemay draw him so that he shall run to Christ and fall at His feet and worship Him!   
I am not, just now, saying anything about faith in Christ except that I do not believe any man worships Christ without having some faith in Him. I am just going to take this very low standard and say that this man, with all his madness, was wise in what he didand the Spirit of God was leading him in the right direction when, breaking loose, as it were, from the devils power for a moment or two, he ran to Christ and worshipped Him. And to any poor soul in like case, I would sayI beseech you, for a minute or two, at any rate, worship the Christ of God whom I preach to you.   
For consider that, first, Christ is God as well as Man, and, therefore, worthy to be worshipped. This poor demoniac was wiser than the Socinians or Unitarians of our dayhe felt that there was more in Christ than in any mere man. Devil-possessed though he was, yet he fell down and worshipped Christ. And you, my Friendyou also know that Christ is God. Well, then, for a few minutes do yourself the justice to worship Him as God over all, blessed forever. If He shall never save you, yet He is worthy to be worshipped, for He is so great and so gracious. Therefore, let your mind be still for a moment and pay your homage before His feet. And from your very heart call Him, Lord, and God.   
Besides, Christ died to save sinners and, being God, and having died to save sinners, I say to you, Worship Him. I recollect the time when I was afraid that Jesus would never save me, but I used to feel in my heart that even if He did not, I must love Him for what He had done for poor sinners. It seemed to me, as I read the wondrous story of His life and death, that if He spurned me I would still lie at His feet and say, You may spurn me, but You are a blessed Christ, for all that and, if You curse me, yet I can only say to You that I well deserve it at Your hands. Do what You will with me, but You saved the dying thief and You saved her out of whom You did cast seven devils, but if You do not deign to save me, yet You are a blessed Christ, and I cannot rail at You, or find fault with You, but I lie down at Your feet and worship You.   
Can you speak and act like that? Can you look up at Him through your tears and, as you see the nail prints in His hands and feet, and that great gash in His side, which reached His heart, can you not feel that you must lie at His feet and worship Him? Just waive all questions about yourself for a minute and think only of Him! Forget even your own sin for the time being and think of what He deserves, and now, at least, for the next few minutes, bow your soul reverently before the Christ of God and worship Him!   
I think I may add that you may well worship Him because there is in that poor, flurried soul of yours, worried and confused and devil-ridden though it is, this thoughtthat Christ alone can save you! You do know that. Where else can you go but to Him? What other door is open to you? What other hand was ever pierced for you? What other side ever bled that it might give cleansing for your sin? Where lives there another person who loves as Christ has loved? Therefore, realize that He is unique, One altogether by Himself and while you cannot and will not worship others, yet, poor devil-possessed soul that you are, fall down and worship Him! Say to Him, Lord, if my night never ends, yet will I look eastward, for there the sun will rise, if not for me. Lord, if I die of thirst, yet will I linger by the lone well in the desert, for if I ever drink at all, I must drink there. I can but perish if I linger at the Crossand I am resolved to linger there. And if my blood shall stain that blessed tree, then even so it must be, for I am resolvedand it is my last resourceif I must perish, I will die here. O Soul, I am not telling you to do any great thing now, am I? I am not urging you to exercise any unreasonable confidence, but I do advise you to fall down and worship at my Lords dear feet! Mad though you are, and your mad worship so poor and imperfect, yet, nevertheless, He will accept you and do great things for you!   
For remember, next, that Christ can save you. Christ can save you! You have gone to the end of your tether, but you have not gone beyond the reach of His power! You have cut yourself and howled through many a dreary night, and snapped your chains and cursed the men that bound you. You have driven away friend and helperand you are altogether undonebut, all the same, Christ can save you! What if the devil is in you? There is no devil in Hell, or out of Hell who does not tremble at Christs Presence! Oh, that He would come and lay His cool hands upon your fevered brow and put His own life into your poor withered heart and make you live! He can save youof that I am sure. I cannot speak as my Master can, but yet my Master can make these poor words of mine to bless and comfort you. And I pray that He may. This is the one thing that I bid you dorun to Him and worship Him!   
IV. Now, turning to my second text, I must briefly remind you of THE SECRET HOPE FOR SINNERSthat while you are yet a great way off, the Father, Himself, will see you, and will run to you! While you are running to His Son, the Father will run to youand you and He shall meet in Christthe only safe meeting place for God and man.   
Turn your thoughts for a minute or two from that Gadarene demoniac to the prodigal son. He was coming back, you remember, and when he was a great way off, I should not wonder that his heart began to misgive him. Oh, he seemed to say, there is the old house! He has reached the top of the hill and he can see it. He recollects those old trees under which he used to play with his brother and he thinks that he can spy out the very spot where he left his father and went that reckless journey into the far country. I wonder what Father will say to me, he says. I do not know how I can ever face him. I have treated him so badly that I must have broken his heart. I fear he is angry with me, and I do not think I can bear his wrath. I am ready to humble myself and say, Father, I have sinned, but, oh, what a wretch I am! He will hardly know me. I do not look like the person I was when I left. What awful times I have been through since last I saw his dear face! I think I must run back again. Bad as it is to perish out in the far country, I do not think I can really face him. He is just turning back when, to his surprise, his father clasps him in his arms, for, when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

O dear Hearts, if I knew there was a poor soul here beginning to seek the Lord, how glad I should be to speak with him! And there are some of my dear Brothers and Sisters here who are always on the lookout for any in whom there is the faintest beginning of a work of Grace! But, you see, we cannot see the germs of Grace as God canwe cannot spy out returning sinners as He can, for God has far-reaching eyes and if there is only half a wish to repent in any of your hearts, the Father sees it! If you only know that there is a Christ and that you would gladly worship Him, but you have not gone the length of really trusting Him and casting your souls upon Him, yet remember that when the prodigal was yet a great way off, his father saw him!   
When God sees anything, His is a very different sight from yours or mine. We see a thing with our eyes and then we get a microscope and look through that, and see it very differently. But God, as it were, always sees everything microscopically and telescopically! He sees the whole of it, sees the very heart and soul of it. God at this moment sees all the sin of the whole of your life. He sees all your brokenness of spirit, all your doubts, all your fears, all the struggles against sin and all the strivings of His Spirit. He takes it all in with a single glance and comprehends and understands it all! And though you are a great way off, the Father sees you and He sees you with a fathers eyes, too. How quick a fathers eyes are when he looks at his boy who is ill! He spies out that hectic flush before the boy believes there is any trace of consumption in his countenance, for a loving father has a physicians eyesand a mothers eyes are still more quick to perceive anything wrong.   
Moreover, God sees with compassionate eyesHis father saw him and had compassion on him. The two things went together. I know a Sister in Christ who did me great good one day. I had helped a man many times, poor wretch that he was. I never clothed him but he sold the garments in a day or two! I never helped him but he sank into deeper degradation than before and, at last, after he had been rigged out afresh from top to toe and a job found for himand he was put into a position for getting on in lifehe came here again. And when I saw him, I shrank back from him. I felt indignant with him, but our Sistera better Christian than Ilifted up both hands and began to cry! The man was covered with vermin and he had evidently been drinking hard. As she lifted up her hands, she cried, O poor creature, we have done all we can to save you, and you will go to Hell. And she stood and cried as if he had been her own child!   
And I believe that is how God feels for poor sinners, for He cannot bear to see them act as they do. If you are coming back to Him, that is the compassionate way in which He is looking at you. He spies you out and, as Jesus wept over Jerusalem, so does the great Father weep over sinners, grieving that they will be so desperately wicked and foolish as to destroy their own souls! V. Now I must close, for our time has gone. The last point to be noticed is, THE ACTION OF THE SINNERS FATHER.   
No sooner did the Father see His son coming back than, He ran. When God runs, it is quick running. He ran, and fell on his neck. And when God stoops to fall on a sinners neck, it is wondrous condescension! This is compassion like a God. And kissed him. Gods kiss is the essence of a million kisses all in one. One kiss from God is the soul of Heaven laid to the heart of a burdened sinner. He ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and so the prodigal was received back into his fathers family!   
What I am longing for is that Gods blessed Spirit may move some of you to run to Christ, if only in the poor way that I have set forth. Just for a few minutes, quietly worship Him, and while you are doing that, may the great Father come in with all His Omnipotent Love and put away your sin, and change your nature, and receive you into eternal union with Himself to the praise of the glory of His Grace! If I were to say ten thousand things, but God did not bless what I had said, all would be in vain. I hope that you do not need more words, but that you will come at once to Christ. Do not perish, I pray you, do not damn your own souls! There is enough misery in this world without incurring the miseries of the world to come! The Lord Himself says, Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die? In the name of the bleeding Christ, seek His mercy even now! By His bloody sweat and crown of thorns, seek Him now! I know no better argument except it be by His death cry, It is finished. Come to Christ! Look to Him and live, even now, and to Him shall be the praise forever and ever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGON:   
*MARK 5:1-24; 35-43.*

Verse 1. And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. They had had a very eventful passage across that small but stormy sea, and Christ had proved Himself to be the Lord High Admiral of the seas. But now that He steps ashore, they are to see His power quite as distinctly displayed as upon the stormy waves.

2, 3. And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains. Those ancient graveyards were in remote places, for the people were too wise to bury their dead inside their cities. Very often the tombs were hewn in caverns in the sides of hills and rocks where the dead were laid. Of course, every man who touched a tomb was thereby ceremonially defiled, so that the tombs were fit places for an unclean person possessed by an unclean spirit. What a ghastly dwelling place! What a grim abode for the man and yet most fitting, for he was dangerous to all who passed bya raving lunatic who could not be restrained by any bonds or chains that could be put upon him!

4, 5. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. Poor creature! His howling must have been right hideous, indeed. Those who passed that way were startled by his unearthly cries, He was a terror to the whole district. Persons could not bear to live anywhere near the places where he resorted. Night and day he was a misery to himself and a terror to all around himsad type of some whom we know, to our sorrow, who have gone madly into sin. It certainly is madness, whatever else it may be, and when madness and badness go together, what a terror such a man becomes!

6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him. There is a wondrous attraction in the Person of our Divine Lord and Master. Though He was a long way off, yet a gracious magnetic influence proceeded from Him by which He drew this poor object of pity to Him. When he saw Jesus afar off, He ran and worshipped Him.

7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the most high God? I adjure You by God, that You torment me not. Who was speaking thenthe man, himself, or the devil within him? It is very hard to tell. The man and the devil were two personalities, but they were so effectually blended into one that it is scarcely possible to tell when it was the man speaking and when it was the devil. So, when sin enters into a man, it gets so completely into his very nature that, sometimes, we feel it must be the evil spirit speaking in the man and yet it is not easy to be quite sure that it is soand we cannot free the man, himself, from the guilt of his words and actions.

8. For He said unto him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit. Whenever Christ speaks to the devil, His message is a very short and very sharp one. The Lord treats Him like the dog that Me is! Come out of the man, you unclean spirit. Christ has no compliment for devils and it is a pity that some of His servants have such soft words when they are dealing with unbelief, which is but a devil, or one of the devils demons.

9. And He asked him, What is your name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. The devil is obliged to tell his name when Christ treats him like a catechized child. And he is compelled to crouch before Christ like a whipped cur at his masters feet.

10. And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country. Satan clings to this world and to any place where he has had a signal triumph, as he had among those tombs and those rocky ravines.

11, 12. Now there was near unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. Such is the malice of these evil spirits, that they would rather do mischief among swine than nowhere! But notice their unanimitywith all the faults that can be laid at the door of demons, you cannot find them divided and quarrelling! They are unanimous in evil and it is a shame that those who are the followers of Christ should often be divided, whereas the kingdom of Satan is not divided against itself. Let us learn from our great enemy at least this one lesson.

13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand). It was strange that there should be so many swine in the country where lived Gods people, Israel. And as they had no right to be there, and were there contrary to Jewish Law, it was well that they should be destroyed.

13-15. And were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus and saw him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. Ah, me! How variously different people look upon the same thing! If you and I, who are Christs disciples, had gone there and seen this poor lunatic fully restored, we would have been filled with holy joy! And we would have composed new hymns of praise in honor of the Great Physician who had cured him! But these people, in their alienation of heart from the Lord Jesus Christ, were afraid. They feared and trembled in the Presence of Almighty Mercy! Omnipotent Love awoke no joy in their hearts, but the spirit of bondage was upon them.

16. And they that saw it, told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. You may be sure that they dwelt upon the latter part of the story, for the loss of the swine touched them more than the healing of the demoniac!

17. And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts. O dear Friends, let none of us ever get into such a state of mind and heart as to pray Christ to go away from us! Yet we have known people act in such a dreadful way as thata person troubled in conscience has said, I will never go and hear that preacher again! I cannot sleep at night after listening to him. I will never read such-and-such a book again, it disturbs me so that I cannot enjoy myself. This is, in effect, to pray Christ to depart out of your coasts! What? Is salvation worth so little that you have no care to possess it? Is Christ Himself so small a blessing that you even tremble lest He should change your nature and save you? I think there were more lunatics than one on that Gadarene shorethe people were all as mad at heart as that one poor man was mad in brain!

18. And when He was come into the shipChrist will go from you if you want Him to go. He forces Himself upon no manthe Grace of God does not violate the will of manit acts in accordance with mans nature and achieves the Divine purpose without disturbing the individuality of the man. So Christ went from Gadara. And when He was come into the ship.

18. He that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him. Was not that a proper prayer? I think, dear Friends, that not only nature, but the mans new nature must have suggested this petition. He prayed Christ that he might be with Him. In our day it is very natural that as soon as we are converted, we should wish to go Home to Heaven. But what is the reason why we should not do so? It is in order that we may bear witness for Christ here on earth and gather in others unto Him!

19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but said unto him, Go home to your friends, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for you, and has had compassion on you. That is one of the chief points on which we ought always to speaknot only to tell of the greatness of the change which the Grace of God has worked in us, but especially to testify to the tenderness of God to us! Oh, how gently did He handle our broken bones! That good Physician of ours has a lions heart, but He has a ladys hand! He does not spare us necessary pain, but He never inflicts even a twinge that is unnecessary. And, oh, the pity of His heart toward us when He sees the sorrow which our sin has brought upon us!

20. And he departed and began to publish in Decapolis.In the ten little cities that were in that region. He departed and began to publish in Decapolis.

20. How great things Jesus had done for Him: and all men did marvel. This is the kind of ready-made preacher whose service for his Lord is usually most effectual. The man who, though he has studied little on many points, yet knows by experience what the Grace of God has done for him, and keeps to that one theme, and tells out the story with simple untrained eloquence, is the man who will do much for his Master! As we read here, all men did marvel. If he had plunged into deep doctrinal subjects, it may be that men would have ridiculed him, but inasmuch as he spoke of what he knew and told of the greatness and graciousness of God, all men did marvel.

21, 22. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto Him: and He was near unto the sea. And, behold.Wherever we see that word, behold, it is like our nota bene, saying to us, Mark well what is coming. Behold

22-24. There came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jarius by name; and when he saw Him, he fell at His feet, and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lies at the point of death: I pray You, come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed Him and thronged Him.

35, 36. While He yet spoke, there came from the ruler of the synagogues house certain which said, Your daughter is dead: why trouble you the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. I can imagine that if Jarius had not been a man of much faith, he would have looked at the Savior with a meaning glance, as much as to say, Only believe? Could You ask more of me when my child is dead? Yet You bid me, Only believe. But, Brothers and Sisters, here is the very sphere of faith! Where there is no wading, there must be swimmingand where there is no hope in the creature, then we must throw ourselves upon the Creator. So, the childs death made room for the fathers faith.

37-39. And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when He was come in, He said unto them, Why make you this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleeps. She was dead, but not dead as far as Christs intention was concerned. She was not so dead as to remain dead. He meant, soon, to bring her back again to life and, therefore, to Him it was as if she were but sleeping.

40. And they laughed Him to scorn. What a wonderful picture this must have beenThe Lord of Glory in the center of a ribald crew who laughed Him to scorn! But it is not the man who is laughed at who is necessarily contemptible, it is often the laughers who are the most deserving of scorn. It was so, here, in Christs day, and it has often been so since.

40. But when He had put them all out. They were not worthy to be answered in any other fashion.   
40-42. He took the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entered in where the damsel was lying. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto you, arise. And straightway the damsel arose and walked, for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. How very often persons were astonished in Christs day! Sometimes it is put, they marveled. At other times, they were amazed, or, they wondered. It would have been well if wonder had always turned to faithbut sometimes it corrupted into hate! God grant that our wonder at Christ may always be of that kind which crystallizes into love!   
43. And He charged them strictly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat. Life must be nourished. Young life, especially, needs frequent food. If Christ has spiritually quickened your child, see that you feed the child with convenient food. If you have won a convert to Christ in the Sunday school, take care that the unadulterated milk of the Word is brought forth, that the new-born child may be fed and nourished till it comes unto the perfect stature of a man in Christ Jesus!

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THE PRODIGALS RECEPTION   
NO. 588

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1864, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.   
Luke 15:20.**

THERE he is! He is as wretched as misery itselfas filthy as his brute associates who could satisfy themselves with huskswhile he could not. His clothes hang about him in rags and what he is on the outside, that he is within. He is disgraced in the eyes of the good and the virtuous remember him with indignation. He has some desires to go back to his fathers house but these desires are not sufficient to alter his condition. Mere desires have not scraped the filth from him, nor have they so much as patched his rags. Whatever he may or may not desire, he is still filthy, still disgraced, still an alien from his fathers houseand he knows itfor, by Gods Grace, he has come to himself.

He would have been angry if we had said as much as this before, but now we cannot describe him in words too black. With many tears and sighs he assures us that he is even worse than he appears to be and that no man can know all the depth of the vileness of his conducthe has spent his living with harlotshe has despised a generous parents love and broken loose from his wise control. He has done evil with both his hands to the utmost of his strength and opportunity. There he stands, notwithstanding this confession, just what I have described him to befor even though he has said within himself, I have sinnedyet that confession has not removed his griefs.

He acknowledges that he is not worthy to be called a sonand it is true he is not. But his unworthiness is not removed by his consciousness of it nor by his confession of it. He has no claims to a fathers love. If that father shuts the door in his face, he acts with justice. If he shall refuse so much as to speak a single word, except words of rebuke, no one can blame the father, for the son has so sadly erred. To this the son utters no denial. He confesses that if he is cast away forever, he well deserves it.

This picture, I know, is the photograph of some who are now present. You feel your vileness and sinfulness but you cannot look upon that sense of vileness as in any way extenuating or altering your condition. You feel, but you cannot plead, your feelings. You confess this morning that you have desires towards God but that you have no rights to Himyou cannot demand anything at His hands. If your soul were sent to Hell, His righteous Law approves it and so does your own conscience! You can see your rags. You can mark your filthiness. You can long for something better but you are no better. You have no more claims than you used to have upon Gods mercy. You stand here today a self-convicted offender against the loving kindness and holiness of God.

I pray that to such of you as are in this shape I may be the bearer of a message from God to your soul this morning. O you who know the Lord, put up earnest and silent prayers just now that my message may come home with power to troubled consciences! And I beseech you, for your own profit, look back to the hole of the pit where you were dug and to the miry clay where you were drawn and remember how God received you! And while we talk of what He is willing and able to do to the far-off sinners, let your souls leap with joyous gratitude at the recollection of how He received you into His love and made you partakers of His Grace in days gone by.

There are two things in the textthe first is the condition of many a seekerhe is yet a great way off. And then, secondly, the matchless kindness of the Father towards him.

I. First, dear Friends, THE CONDITION OF SUCH A SEEKERHE IS YET A GREAT WAY OFF. He is a great way off if you consider one or two things. Remember his need of strength. This poor young man had, for some time, been without foodbrought so very low that the husks upon which the swine fed would have seemed a dainty to him if he could have eaten them. He is so hungry that he has become emaciated and to him every mile has the weariness of leagues within it.

It costs him many pains and sore griefs to drag himself along, even though it is but an inch. So the sinner is a long way off from God when you consider his utter need of strength to come to God. Even such strength as God has given him is very painfully used. God has given him strength enough to desire salvation but those desires are always accompanied with deep and sincere grief for sin. The point which he has already reached has exhausted all his power and all he can do is fall down before Jesus and say

*Oh, for this no strength have I,   
My strength is at Your feet to lie.*

He is a great way off, again, if you consider his need of courage. He longs to see his father but yet the probabilities are that if his father should come he would run awaythe very sound of his fathers footsteps would act upon him as they did on Adam in the gardenhe would hide himself among the trees. So instead of crying after his father, the great father would have to cry after himWhere are you, poor fallen creature? Where are you? His need of courage, therefore, makes the distance long for every step up to now has been taken as though into the jaws of death. Ah, says the sinner, it must be a long time before I can dare to hope for my inequities have gone over my head so that I cannot look up.

Are you, then, in alarm and dread this morning? Do your prayers seem to have been no prayers at all? When you think of God, does terror come over your mind and you feel that you are a long, long way from Him? Do you imagine that it is not likely that He will hear your cries nor give heed to your words? You are yet a great way off. You are a great way off when we consider the difficulty of the way of repentance. John Bunyan tells us that Christian found, when he went back to the arbor after his lost roll, that it was very hard work going back. Every backslider finds it so and every penitent sinner knows that there is a bitterness in mourning for sin comparable to the loss of ones only son.

A drowning man feels no great painthe sensations of drowning are even said to be pleasant. It is only when the man is being restored to life when the blood begins to make the veins tingle because life leaps there, when once again the nerves are sensitivethen, we are told, the whole body is full of many agonies! But then they are the agonies of life! And so the poor penitent feels the goal must be a great way off, for if he had to feel as he now feels, even for a month, it were too long a time. And if he had to journey many miles as he now journeys, so painfully, with such bleeding feet, it would, indeed, be a great way!

Let us look into this matter and show that while the road seems long on this account, it really is long if we view it in a certain light. There are many seeking sinners who are a great way off in their life. I think I see the man now and hear him thus bewail himselfI have left off my drunkenness. I could not sit where I used to sit by the hour. I thank God I shall never be seen reeling through the streets again, for that groveling lust I detest. I have given up Sabbath-breaking and I am found in Gods House. And I have endeavored, as much as I can, to renounce the habit of swearing, but still I am a great way offI do not feel as if I could yet lay hold of Christ for I cannot master my own passions yet.

An old companion stopped me this week and he had not long been talking before I found the old man was in me and the old lusting came up into my face again. Why, Sir, the other day an oath came rapping out. I thought 1 had got over it, but I had notI am a great way off. When I read of what saints are and observe what true Christians are, I do feel that my conduct is so inconsistent and so widely apart from what it ought to be that I know that I am a great way off.

Ah, dear Friend, you are. And if you had to come to God by the way of your own righteousness you would never reach Him for He is not thus to be found. Christ Jesus is the way! He is the safe, sure, and perfect road to God. He who sees Jesus has seen the Father. But he who looks to himself will only see despair. The road to Heaven by Mount Sinai is impassable by mortal man, but Calvary leads to Glory! The secret places of the stairs are

in the wounds of Jesus.

Again, you feel yourself a great way off as to knowledge. Why, you say, before I felt thus I considered myself a master of all theology. I could twist the doctrines round my fingers. When I listened to a sermon I felt quite able to criticize it and to give my judgment. Now I see that my judgment was about as valuable as the criticism of a blind man upon a picture, for I was without spiritual sight. Now I feel myself to be a fool! I do know what sin means, but only to a degree. Even here I feel that I am not conscious of the heinousness of human guilt. I have heard the doctrine of the Atonement of Christ and I thank God I know it to some degree, but the excellence and glory of the Substitutionary Sacrifice which Christ offeredI confess I do not fully comprehend.

The sinners confession now is that instead of understanding Scripture he finds he needs to go, like a child, to school to learn the A B C of it. O Sir, he says, I am a great way off from God for I am so ignorant, so foolish. I seem to be but as a beast when I think of the deep things of God. Ah, poor Soul! Poor young wandering Brother! I wonder not that it seems so to you for the ignorance of the carnal man is, indeed, fearful, and only God can give you light. But He can give it to you in a moment and the distance between you and Him upon the score of ignorance can be bridged at once and you may comprehend even today, with all saints, what are the heights and depths and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

In another point many an earnest seeker is a great way off, I mean in his repentance. Alas, says he, I cannot repent as I ought. If only I could feel the brokenness of heart which I have heard and seen in some! Oh, what would I give for penitential sighs! How thankful would I be if my head were waters and my eyes fountains of tears. If I could even feel that I was as humble as the poor publican and could stand with downcast eyes and beat upon my breast and say, God be merciful to me a sinner. But, alas, I have been a hearer of the Word for years and all the progress I have made is so little that while I know the Gospel is true, I do not feel it. I know myself to be a sinner, and sometimes I mourn over it, but my mourning is so superficial, my repentance is a repentance that needs to be repented of! O Sir, if God would use the heaviest hammer that He hadif He would but break my heartevery broken fragment should bless His name!

I wish I had a genuine repentance. Oh, how I pant to be brought to feel that I am lost and to desire Christ with that vehement desire which will not take a denial. But in this point my heart seems hard as Hell-hardened steel. Cold as a rock of ice. It will not, cannot yield though wooed by Divine love. Adamant itself may run in liquid torrents, but my soul yields to nothing. Lord, break it! Lord, break it!

Ah, poor Heart. I see you are a great way off, but do you know if my Lord should appear to you this morning and say to you, I have loved you with an everlasting love, your heart would break in a moment?

*Law and terrors do but harden,   
All the while they work alone.   
But a sense of blood-bought pardon,   
Can dissolve a heart of stone.*

Great way off as you are, if the Lord pardons you while yet callous and consciously hard of heart, will you not then fall at His feet and commend that great love with which He loved youeven when you were dead in trespasses and sins?

Yes, but I think I hear one say, There is another point in which I feel a great way off, for I have little or no faith. I have heard faith preached every Sunday. I know what it isI think I dobut I cannot reach it. I know that if I cast myself wholly upon Christ I shall be saved. I quite comprehend that He does not ask anything of me, any willings, or doings, or feelingsI know that Christ is willing to receive the greatest sinner out of Hell if that sinner will but come and simply trust Him. I have tried to do it! Sometimes I have thought I had faith, but then, again, when I have looked at my sins I have doubted so dreadfully that I perceive I have no faith at all! There are bright moments with me when I think I can say

*My faith is built on nothing less,*

*Than Jesus blood and righteousness,*   
but oh, when I feel my corruptions within rising upon me, I hear a voice saying, The Philistines are upon you, Samson, and straightway I discover my own weakness. I have not the faith that I want! I am a great way off from it and I fear that I shall never possess it.

Yes, my Brethren, I perceive your difficulty, for I have felt the sorrow of it myself. But oh, my Lord, who is the Giver of faithwho is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sinscan give you the faith you so much desire and can cause you, this morning, to rest with perfect confidence upon the work which He has finished for you! To gather up all things in one word, the truly penitent sinner feels that he is yet a great way off in everything. There is no point upon which you can talk with him but it will be sure to lead to a confession of his deficiency. Begin to put him in the scales of the sanctuary and he cries, Alas, before you put in the weights I can tell you I shall be found wanting. Bring him to the touchstone and he shrinks from it! No, he says, but I cannot endure any sort of trial

*All unholy and unclean, I am nothing else but sin.*

Look, look how well my Master has pictured your case in this parable Yet a great way offyet covered with rags! Yet polluted with filth! Yet in disgrace! Yet a stranger to your Fathers house! There is only this one point about youyou have your face towards your Fatheryou have a desire towards God and you would, oh, you would if you could, lay hold upon eternal life! But you feel too far off for anything like comfortable

hope.

Now I must confess I feel many fears about you who are in this state. I am afraid lest you should come so far and yet go backfor there are many whom we thought had come as far as this and yet they have gone back, after all. Oh, remember that desires after God will not change you so as to save you! You must find Christ! Remember that to say, I will arise, is not enough, nor even to ariseyou must never rest till your Father has given you the kisstill He has put the best robe on you.

I am afraid lest you should rest satisfied and say, I am in a good state. The minister tells us that many are brought to such a state before they are saved. I will stop here. My dear Friend, it is a good state to pass through, but it is a bad state to rest in. I pray you never are content with a sense of sin, never be satisfied with merely knowing that you are not what you ought to be. It never cures the fever for a man to know he has it. His knowledge is in some degree a good sign, for it proves that the fever has not yet driven him to delirium. But it never gives a man perfect health to know that he is sick. It is a good thing for him to know it, for he will not otherwise send for the physicianbut unless it leads to that he will die whether he feels himself to be sick or not.

A mere consciousness that you are hungry while your fathers hired servants have bread enough to spare will not lessen your hungeryou need more than this. You are a great way off and I beseech you remember what the danger is lest you should stop here or should lose what sensibility you already have. Perhaps despair may come upon you. Some have committed suicide while under a sense of the greatness of their distance from God because they dared not look to the Savior. Our prayers shall go up to God that the second part of our text may come true to you and that backsliding and despair alike may be prevented by the speedy coming of God dressed in the robes of Grace to meet your guilty soul and give you joy and peace through believing!

II. Secondlyand O, may the Master give us His helpwe have to consider THE MATCHLESS KINDNESS OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER. We must take each word and dwell upon it. First of all we have here Divine observation. When he was yet a great way off his father saw him. It is true He has always seen him. God sees the sinner in every state and in every position. Yes, and sees him with an eye of love, toosuch a chosen sinner as is described in this textnot with complacency, but with affection God looks upon His wandering chosen ones.

I say that Father saw His son when he spent his living with harlots. He saw him with deep sorrow when he gladly would have filled his belly with the husks which the swine ate. But now, if there can be such a thing as for Divine Omniscience to become more exact, the Father sees him with an eye full of a more tender love, a greater care. His father saw him. Oh, what a sight it was for a father to see! His son, it is true, but his reprobate son, who had dishonored his fathers namebrought down the name of an honorable house to be mentioned among the dregs and scum of the earth!

There he is! What a sight for a fathers eye! He is filthy, as though he had been rolling in the mire. And his fine clothing has long ago lost its fine colors and hangs about him in wretched rags. The father does not turn away and try to forget himhe fixes his full gaze upon him. Sinner, you know that God sees you this morning! Sitting in this house you are observed by the God of Heaven. There is not a desire in your heart unread by Him, nor a tear in your eye which He does not observe! I tell you He has seen your midnight sins. He has heard your cursing and your blasphemies and yet He has loved you notwithstanding all that you have done!

You could hardly have been a worse rebel against Him and yet He has noted you in His book of love and determined to save you! The eye of His love has followed you wherever you have gone. Is there not some comfort here? Why could not he see his father? Was it the effect of the tears in his eyes that he could not see? Or was it that his father was of quicker sight than he? Sinner, you can not see God for you are unbelieving and carnal and blind, but He can see you! Your tears of penitence block up your sight, but your Father is quick of eye and He beholds you and loves you now. In every glance there is love.

His father saw him. Observe this was a loving observation, for it is written, His father saw him. He did not see him as a mere casual observer. He did not note him as a man might note his friends child with some pity and benevolence, but he marked him as a father, alone, can do. What a quick eye a parent has! Why, I have known a young man come home, perhaps for a short holidaythe mother has heard nothing, not even a whisper, as to her sons conduct and yet she cannot help observing to her husband, There is a something about John which makes me suspect that he is not going on as he should do. I do not know, my Husband, she says, what it is. But yet I am sure he is getting among bad companions. She will read his character at once. And the father notes something, too. He cannot precisely say what, but he knows it to be cause for anxiety.

But here we have a Father who can see everything and who has as much of the quickness of love as He has of the certainty of knowledge. He can, therefore, see every spot and bruise and note every putrefying sore. He sees His poor son right through as though he were a vase of crystal He reads his heartnot merely the telltale garments. Not merely the sorrowful tale of the unwashed face and those clouted shoes, but He can read his soul! He understands the whole of his miserable plight. O poor Sinner, there is no need for you to give information to your God for He knows it already! You need not pick your words in prayer in order to make your case plain and easy to understand! God can see it! All you have to do is to uncover your wounds, your bruises and your putrefying sores and

say, My Father, You see it all, the black tale you read in a moment. My Father, have pity upon me.

The next thought to be well considered is Divine compassion. When he saw him he had compassion on him. Does not the word compassion mean suffering with, or, fellow-suffering? What is compassion, then, but putting yourself into the place of the sufferer and feeling his grief? If I may say so, the father put himself into the sons rags and then felt as much pity for him as that poor ragged prodigal could have felt for himself. I do not know how to bring up your compassion this morning unless it is by supposing that it is your own case.

I saw, not many hours ago, a young man who brought to my mind the prodigal in this casehis face marked with innumerable lines of sin and wretchedness. His body lean and emaciated, his clothes close-buttoned his whole appearance the very mirror of woe. He knocked at my door. I knew his situationI cannot hurt him by telling it. He had disgraced his familynot once or twicebut many times. At last he drew out what money he had in the business of a respectable family, came up to London with four hundred pounds and in about five weeks spent it all!

And, without a single farthing to help himself, he often begs for bread. And I fear that he has often crept at night into the parks to sleep and thus has brought aches and pains into his bones which will be with him till he dies. He wanders the streets by day a vagabond and a reprobate. I have written to his friendsthe case has been put before them. They will not have anything to do with him. And considering his shameful conduct, I do not wonder. He has no father and no mother left. If he were helped beyond mere food and lodging, as far as we can judge, it would be money thrown away.

If he were helped, he seems so desperately set on wickedness that he would do the same again. Yet, as I think, I can but desire to see him have one more chance, at least, and he would have it, I doubt not, if his father yet lived. But others feel the fountains of their love are stayed. As I think of him, I cannot but feel that if he were a son of mine and I were his father and I saw him in such a case come to my door, whatever the crime was that he had committed, I must fall upon his neck and kiss him. The biggest sin could not put out forever the sparks of paternal love. I might condemn the sin in sharpest terms and most severely. I might regret that he had ever been born and cry with David, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for you! but I could not shut him out of my house, nor refuse to call him my child. My child he is and my child he shall be till he dies.

You feel just now that if it were your child you would do the same. That is how God feels towards you, His chosen, His repentant child. You are His childI hope so, I trust sothose desires which you have in your soul towards Him make me feel that you are one of His children. And as God looks out of Heaven He knows what you mean. What is it? What shall I say? No, I need not describe, but, Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. He will have compassion upon you. He will receive you to His bosombe of good courage, for the text says, He had compassion on him.

Notice and observe carefully the swiftness of this Divine love. He ran. Probably he was walking on the top of his house and looking out for his son, when one morning he just caught a glimpse of a poor sorry figure in the distance. If he had been anything but the father he would not have known it to be his son. But he looked and looked again, till at last he said, It is he! Oh, what marks of famine are upon him and of suffering, too! And down comes the old gentlemanI think I see him running downstairs and the servants come to the windows and the doors, and say, Where is Master going? I have not seen him run at that rate for many a day.

See, there he goes! He does not take the road for that is a little round about. But there is a gap through the hedge and he is jumping over it! The straightest way that he can find he chooses. And before the son has had time to notice who it is, he is on him and has his arms about him, falling upon his neck and kissing him! I remember a young prodigal who was received in the same way. Here he stands. It is I, myself. I sat in a little Chapel, little dreaming that my Father saw me. Certainly I was a great way off.

I felt something of my need of Christ, but I did not know what I must do to be saved. Though taught the letter of the Word, I was spiritually ignorant of the plan of salvation. Though taught it from my youth up, I knew it not. I felt, but I did not feel what I wished to feel. If ever there was a soul that knew itself to be far off from God, I was that soul. And yet in a moment, in one single momentno sooner had I heard the wordsLook unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earthno sooner had I turned my eyes to Jesus Crucified than I felt my perfect reconciliation with God! I knew my sins were then forgiven!

There was no time for getting out of my heavenly Fathers wayit was done and done in an instant! And in my case, at least, He ran and fell upon my neck to kiss me. I hope that will be the case this morning before you can get out of this placebefore you can get back to your old doubts and fears and sighs and criesI hope here the Lord of Love will run and meet you and fall upon your neck and kiss you!

After noticing thusobservation, compassion and swiftness, do not forget the nearnessHe fell upon his neck and kissed him. This I can understand by experience, but it is too wonderful for me to explain. He fell upon his neck. He did not stand at a distance and say, John, I would be very glad to kiss you but you are too filthy. I do not know what may be under those filthy rags. I do not feel inclined to fall upon your neck just yetyou are too far gone for me. I love you, but there is a limit to the

display of love. When I have got you into a proper state, then I may manifest my affection to you but I cannot just now, while you are so very foul. Oh, no! But before he is washed He falls on his neckthere is the wonder of it! I can understand how God manifests His love to a soul that is washed in Jesus blood and knows it. But how He could fall upon the

neck of a foul, filthy sinner as such! There it isnot as sanctified, not as having anything good in himselfbut as nothing but a filthy, foul, desperate rebel, God falls upon his neck and kisses him! Oh, strange miracle of love! The riddle is solved when you remember that God never had looked upon that sinner as he was in himselfHe had always looked upon him as he was in Christ!

And when He fell upon that prodigals neck, He did, in effect, only fall upon the neck of His once-suffering Son, Jesus Christ, and He kissed the sinner because He saw him in Christ! He did not see the sinners loathsomeness, but saw only Christs loveliness and therefore kissed him as He would have kissed his Substitute. Observe how near God comes to the sinner! It was said of that eminent saint and martyr, Bishop Hooper, that on one occasion a man in deep distress was allowed to go into his prison to tell his tale of conscience. But Bishop Hooper looked so sternly upon him and addressed him so severely, at first, that the poor soul ran away and could not get comfort until he had sought out another minister of a gentler aspect.

Now Hooper really was a gracious and loving soul, but the sternness of his manner kept the penitent off. There is no such stern manner in our heavenly Father! He loves to receive His prodigals. When He comes there is no, Hold off! No Keep off! to the sinner. No, He falls upon his neck and He kisses him! There is yet another thought to be brought out of the metaphor of kissing. We are not to pass that over without dipping our cup in the honey. In kissing his son the father recognizes relationship. He said, with emphasis, You are my son, and the prodigal was

*To his Fathers bosom pressed,   
Once for all a child confessed.*

Again, that kiss was the seal of forgiveness. He would not have kissed him if he had been angry with him. He forgave him, forgave him all. There was, moreover, something more than forgivenessthere was acceptance I receive you back into my heart as though you were worthy of all that I give to your elder brother and therefore I kiss you. Surely this was also a kiss of delightas if he took pleasure in him, delighting in him, feasting his eyes with the sight of him and feeling more happy to see him than to see all his fields and the fatted calves and all the treasures that he possessed! His delight was in seeing this poor restored child. Surely this is all summed up in a kiss.

And if this morning my Father and your Father should come out to meet mourning penitents, in a moment He will show you that you are His children! You shall say, Abba, Father, on your road to your own house! You shall feel that your sins are all forgiven, that every particle has been cast behind Jehovahs back! You shall feel today that you are accepted as your faith looks to Christ you shall see that God accepts youbecause Christ your Substitute is worthy of Gods love and Gods delight! I trust you shall, this very morning, delight yourself in God, because God delights Himself in you and you shall hear Him whisper in your ear, You shall be called Hephzibah . . . for the Lord delights in you.

I wish I could picture such a text as this as it ought to be. It needs some tender, sympathetic heartsome man who is the very soul of pathosto work out the tender touches of such a verse as this! But, oh, though I cannot describe it, I hope you will feel it and that is better than description. I come not here to paint the scene, except to be the brush in Gods hand to paint it on your hearts. There are some of you who can say, I do not want descriptions, for I have felt it. I went to Christ and told Him my case and prayed Him to meet me. Now I believe on Him and I have gone my way rejoicing in Him.

We will just say these words and have done. In summing up, one may notice that this sinner, though he was a great way off, was not received to full pardon and adoption and acceptance by a gradual process, but he was received at once! He was not allowed to enter into the outhouse first and to sleep in a barn at night. And then afterwards allowed to come, sometimes, and have his meals with the servants in the kitchen. And then afterwards allowed to sit at the end of the table and by degrees brought near. No. The father fell on his neck and kissed him the first moment! He gets as near to God, as he ever will, the very first moment! So a saved soul may not enjoy and know so much, but he is as near and dear to God the first moment he believes as he ever will bea true heir of all things in Christ and as truly so as even when he shall mount to Heaven to be glorified and to be like his Lord.

Oh, what a wonder is this! Fresh from his pigsty, was he not? Yet in a fathers bosom! Fresh from the swine with their grunts in his ears and now he hears a fathers loving words! A few days ago he was putting husks to his mouth and now it is a fathers lips that are on his lips. What a change and all at once! I say there is no gradual process in this, but the thing is done at oncein a moment he comes to his fatherhis father comes to him and he is in his fathers arms!

Observe again, as there was not a gradual reception, there was not a partial reception. He was not forgiven on conditions. He was not received to his fathers heart if he would do so-and-so. No. There were no ifs, no buts. He was kissed and clothed and feasted without a single condition of any kind whatever. No questions askedhis father had cast his offenses behind his back in a moment and he was received without even a

censure or a rebuke. It was not a partial reception. He was not received to some things and refused others. He was not, for instance, allowed to call himself a child, but to think of himself an inferior. No! He wears the best robe. He has the ring on his finger. He has the shoes on his feet. And he joins in eating the fatted calf.

And so the sinner is not received to a second-class place, but he is taken to the full position of a child of God. It is not a gradual nor yet a partial reception. And once more, it is not a temporary reception. His father did not kiss him and then turn him out at the back door. He did not receive him for a time, and then afterwards say to him, Go your way. I have had pity upon you. You have now a new startgo into the far country and mend your ways. No, the father would say to him what he had already said to the elder brother, Son, you are ever with me and all that I have is yours.

In the parable, the son could not have the goods restored for he had spent his part. But in truth itself and matter of fact, God makes the man who comes in at the eleventh hour equal with the one who came in at the first hour of the dayHe gives every man the penny. And He gives to the child who has been the most wandering the same privileges and ultimately the same heritage which He gives to His own who have been these many years with Him and have not transgressed His Commandments.

That is a remarkable passage in one of the Prophets, where he says, Ekron as a Jebusite, meaning that the Philistine, when converted, should be treated just the same as the original inhabitants of Jerusalem that the branches of the olive which were grafted in have the same privileges as the original branches! When God takes men from being heirs of wrath and makes them heirs of Grace they have just as much privilege at the first as though they had been heirs of Grace twenty years! In Gods sight they always were heirs of Grace and from all eternity He viewed His most wandering sons

*Not as they stood in Adams fall,   
When sin and ruin covered all.   
But as theyll stand another day,   
Fairer than the suns meridian ray.*

O, I would to God that He would in His infinite mercy bring some of His own dear children home this day and He shall have the praise, world without end. Amen.

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A PROGRAM NEVER CARRIED OUT   
NO. 2520

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY JUNE 6, 1897. BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTTOBER. 25, 1885.

**And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in**

**your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. Luke 15:20, 21.**

I THOUGHT I would hardly preach a set discourse from this familiar text, but just give you some odds and ends of thought upon these words. You know that there are many people who are in such a low state of mindand who have such a humble opinion of themselves that if I bring them a loaf of bread, they will be afraid to eat itso I have only brought a few crumbs, this time, and my hope is that they will say with the Syrophenician woman, Truth, Lord: yet the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table. May any such persons who are here feel able to pick up a stray thought which shall be spiritual food to them, even manna sent from Heaven and, perhaps, when they have eaten one morsel of it, they may then dare to eat more, and yet more, until their souls are satisfied and they learn to rejoice in the God of their salvation! I am going to take a roving commission and ramble about somewhat more than usualand I shall do so because I know there are many here who are, themselves, rambling. Perhaps if I ramble, I may come across them. If I keep along the city road, some of the hedge birds that are out of the way may get missed, but if I go over hedge and ditch and say something unusual here and something startling thereit may be that they will wonder how I went just where they happened to be as much as I marvel how they have managed to go where they are!

My one thought at this time is not concerning my subject, but my objective. I have not any particular subject, but my objective is that some poor prodigal may return to God, that some lost child may come back to the Fathers heart, that, in fact, some sinner may repent of sin and believe in Jesus and so enter into rest this very hour! I would rather be the means of saving a soul from death than be the greatest orator on earth! I would rather bring the poorest woman in the world to the feet of Jesus than I would be made Archbishop of Canterbury! There is no honor and no dignity under Heaven that can content us unless souls are won for Christ! And if souls are won, we shall care little how the great work was done instrumentally, for God will have the whole of the glory of it.

I. From my text I am going, first, to make this observation, that THE COMING SINNERS FORECASTS DIFFER VERY MUCH FROM THE FACTS.

When a sinner comes back to God, he generally has a notion of how he is coming back and what he is going to feeland what he is going to say, and what he is going to receive. He fashions in his mind a kind of program of what he fancies is about to happen. But, so far as my observation has gone, his programs are generally good for nothing and his forecasts of what will happen are usually quite mistaken! This forlorn son said, I will arise and go to my father, and I will ask him to make me as one of his hired servants.

Notice, dear Friends, first, that the prodigals program was not carried out with regard to his own prayers. He did not say in prayer what he had determined that he would say. He did begin to repeat it, but he never finished it. You remember that he resolved to say, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants. That was his intention, but the prayer he actually uttered did not contain that last sentence, he did not cry, Make me as one of your hired servants! I suppose that he was going to say it, but his father kissed him and so stopped it. No, my boy, the father seemed to say, you shall not even ask to be made a hired servant. I know that humble petition is simmering in your heart, but it shall never come out of your lips, I will not permit you to say that.

Perhaps someone here is saying, I know what I will say tonight when I pray, I know how I will confess my sin, I know what I will ask of God. No, dear Friend, you do not! When you come to the real praying, you will find that something very different will occur to your mind. Much of what now suggests itself to you will fly away and fresh thoughts will come in. Therefore, do not be particular about making up a program at all. If this son had gone back to his father without having a preconceived prayer, it would have been just as well. And so, if you do but go back, with a strong desire, to the great Father from whom you have wanderedeven though you cannot compose a prayer in words, never mind about that! The composition would have been of little value to you if you had been able to make it. Go with your broken heart and pour out sighs and cries and tears before the Lord. Wordless though the prayers may be, they shall not lack for force and energy to prevail with God.

But the prodigals program also broke down, very sweetly and blessedly, with regard to his fathers action. He had, in his minds eye, a vision of what his father would do. Possibly he feared that his father would spurn him altogether but, dismissing that fear, he may have thought, If my father is very kind, indeed, to me, he will at least severely chide me and then put me into some low position in the household and bid me seek to retrieve my lost character and work my way up till, at last, I may be permitted to sit somewhere at the bottom of the table. He had some such notion as that, but his program went all to pieces because his father suddenly manifested his intense love to him. He was a great way off, his tears were flowing and his heart was trembling, yet, in a moment, before he knew where he was, his fathers arms were around his neck and the kiss of love was on his cheek!

So, when a sinner is coming to Christ, he tries to fancy what will happen. He says, I must be in distress of mind, I must be in deep anguish, I must be pleading and crying to God for forgiveness and so, perhaps, the Light of God will gradually come to me. Then it often happens that, in a single moment, the soul finds perfect peace with God. I should not wonder if, while I am speaking, the Spirit of God should come rushing into some dry and thirsty soul and fill it up to the brim with heavenly delight! Multitudes of persons find peace with God all of a sudden. It is not so with all, for God has many ways of working. The wind blows where it will, but have you not sometimes noticed that when everything has been very quiet and still, suddenly you have heard the moaning of the wind and then, almost before you were aware of it, the clouds were flying before the breeze, like winged chariots? Have you never been on the Thames, in a yacht, when there has come a sudden squall that seemed as if it would upset everything? Well the Spirit of God can come upon a man just as swiftly as that! The poor soul is dreaming of the way in which he thinks the blessing may come to him, but when it is bestowed by God, it surprises, astonishes, astounds him! Before he expects such gifts, sin is forgiven, Divine Grace is received, joy fills the heart and the man is glad with exceedingly great joy. May it be so with some of you who are now here! May your program be broken in that respect by the sudden incoming of unexpected Grace!

There is no doubt whatever that this prodigal son expected that he would have to undergo a probationthat his father would put him in quarantine for a time. He felt that he was not fit to be received back just as he was, that his father could not let him sit at the table the first day he came home, but that he would say to him, Remember how badly you have behaved, young manyou have acted so wildly that it will be long before I can think of trusting you again. Instead of speaking thus, the father said, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring here the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. This was done at once, the very first day the prodigal returned! What? asks someone, can I be introduced to the highest privileges of Christian communion as soon as I come to Christ? Yes, that is Gods way of welcoming sinners! Look at the dying thief. The very day he repented, he went to Paradise! Though he had been a great sinner until then, Jesus said to him, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Only think of a child of the devil in the morning being changed to a child of God at nightand made to rejoice in Christ Jesus with the happiest of the saints in Glory!

It was after a similar fashion in the case of this younger son. He was to be in no inferior position, he was to be in all ways equal to his elder brother and, in some respects, there was even a higher joy concerning him. I wish it might happen to some of you as it happened to me one Sunday morning, long ago. I went into the little House of Prayer as burdened as ever this forlorn young man could be, but I came out as full of joy as ever that household was when they began to be merry. Why should it not be so with you, also? I have seen my Master give His most charming feasts to newcomers and make a festival for raw recruitsyes, and set upon the tables all the delights of His dearest love to be food for sinners who, but a day or two before, were feeding the swine of their lusts and indulging in every kind of sin! Oh, the splendor of Almighty Love, the Infinite Majesty of the Grace of God to deal thus with the guilty! Your poor program is no guide at all! You think that God will treat you as men deal with men, but, lo, He deals with you after the manner of God! 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.

So, you see, this prodigals program was erroneous, both as to his own prayers and as to his fathers action. In like manner God deals with His returning prodigals exceeding abundantly above all they ask or even think. This fact ought to induce many to come to Christ who are, at present, afraid to come. You do not know, dear Friends, how gracious my Lord is! You would never stand outside His door if you knew what accommodation He has for the poorest beggar who does but knock. Did you but know the readiness of Christs heart to move towards the chief of sinners, you would not linger away from Him. If you could only imagine how near you are to a heavenly bliss, the likes of which you have never tasted, you would cross the borderline at once! If other prodigals could only know what music and what dancing of a celestial kind might soon be all around them, they would not stay with the citizens of this barren country feeding the swine of this worldthey would hasten home to the Fathers house and the Fathers love! Do not stay away, Brothers and Sisters, because of that foolish program of yours which makes you fancy that you must feel this and must feel that! God does not save us according to our programsHe has a far better way of His own! He does not act according to our prejudices or suppositions, but according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus!

So much for the first observation, that the coming sinners forecasts differ very much from the facts.   
II. My second remark is that THAT WHICH PREVAILS WITH GOD IS NOT THE COMING SINNERS PRAYER TO GOD, BUT GODS SIGHT OF HIM.   
Notice, when the prodigal resolved to return, he promised to himself what he would say to his father. But his father fell on his neck and kissed him before he could utter his petitionWhen he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned. The utterance of the prayer of the son followed the display of love on the part of the father! The reason why the father acted with such wondrous favor to his son was not because the prodigal had prayed, for he had not done so. He had resolved to pray, but he had not actually prayed. His prayer followed the deed of mercy done by his fatherand the cause of that mercy was that his father saw him! Do notice that his father saw him and, therefore, had compassion on him. His father saw him and, therefore, ran to him. His father saw him and, therefore, fell on his neck. His father saw him and, therefore, kissed him!   
What did the father see? Long before the prodigal saw his father, his father saw him and, first, he saw his misery. Suppose that it were your boy, you who have children. Suppose that somewhere in this crowd, perhaps near the door, you should see that son of yours who long ago ran away from you? Possibly he has been far away at seathat might not be to his discredit, but, alas, he has also been living a very loose and sinful life. You have enquired for him. You have advertised for him, but you have not been able to find him. Suppose that you should, tonight, stumble on him all in rags, lean, cadaverous, consumptive, ready to die? I am sure that you would not begin enquiring what he had done, or where he had been, or anything of the sort! It would be the very sight of his awful misery, the lines of his sorrow and sickness that would at once touch your heart! As you would look at him, you would see his misery and you would also see his relationship to you. You would ask, Is that really my boy? Is that my son? When you had reckoned him up and, perhaps, his mother at your side had said, Yes, that is our John, I am sure it is, there would be no further delayyour heart would have compassion and you would be ready to fall upon his neck and kiss him in the Tabernacle just as he is!   
I knew a good minister whose name happened to be a Jewish one. We will say, Benjamin. However, he was not a Jew, but one day there called upon him a venerable Israelite who fell at once upon the ministers neck and said, O my son, my dear lost son! The good man looked at him and said, I do not understand what you mean, Sir. The Jew replied, Years ago, I had a son who became a Christian and I disowned him. And I have always lamented for him ever since. I have hunted the world for him. I have advertised for him and now, at last, I thank the God of Abraham that I have found him. The good minister had to say, My dear Sir, I am very sorry for you, but I am obliged to rob you of your comfort. I am not a Jew, I am a Gentile. My father long since went to be with God. You have made a mistake. So the poor old Jew went down the stairs broken-hearted because he had not found his son. It does not matter whether a man is a Jew or a Gentilehe loves his boy, does he not? Why, because we are men, we cannot bear to see our offspring in sickness and sorrow and poverty! And though they may have broken our hearts by their sin, yet they have not broken our hearts off from love to them.   
It is just thus that God looks towards you, O penitent Sinner! It is not because you pray. It is not because of anything in you, but it is because He sees your sin and your miseryand sees in you, as a returning penitent, a child of His heart, one whom He has loved with an everlasting love, one for whom He gave His Son to die! And because He sees this in you, therefore He falls upon your neck and manifests Himself in Infinite Love to you. I have put this Truth of God, I hope, very plainly. But to any poor soul who says, I cannot pray, I would answer, Suppose you cannot? That is no reason why the Father should not run and fall upon your neck and kiss you. But, oh, I cannot put words together! I have tried, but failed to do so. Do you not see that this father kissed his son before the prodigal had said a word? Do you not perceive that very clearly in the narrative? The prayer, truly, had been concocted in his own heart, but he had not uttered it! He never uttered all of it, but his father had kissed him and blessed him before he had spoken a single word! So, it is not your prayers, it is not your feelings, it is not anything in you that will save youit is the great heart of God who loves you that is your highest hope and the real grounds why you should be saved! Would to God you could believe this and find peace with Him through Jesus Christ His Son even now!   
III. Now I want to make a third observation, which is that THE FASHION OF PRAYER MATTERS LITTLE, AS LONG AS IT IS TRUE PRAYER.   
This young man had intended to pray a contradictory prayer. Notice what his prayer was. It makes me smile as I read it. ListenI will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, and so on, I am not worthy to be called your son. Why, then, did he call him, Father? So there is often a beautiful inconsistency about a true penitents prayer he puts God in His right place by calling Him, Father, yet he does not dare, himself, to get into his right place to be called a son. But, surely, if I may call God, Father, I may call myself, son, for the relationship necessarily exists on both sides if it exists at all! Ah, poor Sinner, I daresay your first prayer is full of blunders, but that does not matter as long as your heart is in it! The Lord knows how to put our prayers together and take all the contradictions out of themHe understands the meaning of our sighs and our groans!  
*To Him theres music in a groan   
And beauty in a tear.*   
Notice, too, that the prodigals prayer was a confession rather than a prayer. Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. You see, he does not ask for anythinghe just acknowledges his guiltiness and his unworthiness. It is only part of a prayera one-legged prayer, as it werebut, blessed be God, He accepts limping prayers! The oddest, strangest, most singular prayers that ever were prayed, so long as the heart of the man is in them going towards the Father, shall not be refused!   
I am going to read you some Scriptures to comfort those of you who are afraid you cannot be saved because you cannot pray. Have you ever noticed what is regarded as prayer according to the Word of God? David says, in the 22nd Psalm, Why are You so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? So that roaring is prayer when the heart is so sad that it cannot use wordswhen it roars like a wild beast rather than speaks like a human being! Some of you know what it means to get into such a state of misery that you dare not speak and yet cannot be silent to be so distracted that you cannot think consecutively, you cannot read your own thoughts and do not know how to shape them before Godso that your utterance is more that of the roaring of a wounded and dying animal than the praying of a sensible, intelligent man. Yet even that is prayer and God accepts it as prayer!   
Cries also are prayers. In the same 22nd Psalm, at the second verse, we read, O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent. This is the cry of pain that comes from a child, rather than the intelligent expression of the thoughts within the soul. But have you never known, dear Friend, what it is to be in such distress, even as a man, that you wish you could get alone and weep? The tears, perhaps, have refused to come, and you have sat down and said, I am lost! I am lost. Ah, me! What will become of me, O my God? Such crying as that, when you can hardly get the words out, is the best praying in the world. It is only, Oh! and, Ah! and, Would that! and all manner of broken and strange expressions. Yet those are prayers such as God hears and answers!   
I will give you another text to show that prayer may sometimes take the shape of a cry. In Psalm 69:3, we read, I am weary of my crying: my throat is dry. So crying is prayer, even hoarse crying, when, at last, the throat becomes so dry that not a word can be uttered. But that is not all, for

breathing may also be praying. In the Book of Lamentations, in the third Chapter, at the 56th verse, we find this amazing petition, Hide not Your ears from my breathing. The man cannot speak, his soul is too full. If he looks through Heaven and earth, he cannot find a word that he can utter! But quick and hot are the breathings of his life which seems as if it would ebb away. Yet that is true prayer. Some of the best prayer that ever reaches the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth is just like thatthe breathing of agony when the very life seems to be expiring. As everything that has breath is to praise Jehovah, so let everyone who has breath feel that he can pray, for even breathing may be prayer!   
Yes, and when you cannot breathe, what do you do, then? Why, when a man grows short of breath, then he pants. That again is prayer. Hear how David puts it in Psalm 42:1As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God! You know how the stag that has been hunted, longs to have its smoking flanks in the water brooks, and to take a deep draught from the cooling stream, for it seems to be burning within like an oven. There it stands and pants to find the waterits whole soul seems to go up and down as it pants. Well, when you cannot breathe, when you feel as if that strong breath that I mentioned just now cannot be reached by you, you can pant! I opened my mouth and panted, said David. Well, that again is some of the best prayer that God ever hears. Do not be afraid, therefore, that you cannot pray if even panting is prayer!   
Yet further, in the 69th Psalm, at the third verse, David says, My eyes fail while I wait for my God. And in the fifth Psalm, third verse, In the morning will I direct my prayer unto You, and will look up. So, you see, prayer may take another shapelooking up may be a prayer. I have read of an old saint who usually spent a whole hour in the day alone. And being watched and noticed, it was seen that he never said anything, but he stood quite still for an hour. So he was asked, What, then, is your devotion? He answered, I look at God, and God looks at me. And I must confess that I sometimes find it a very high form of devotion to sit quite still and look up. There is a reverent silence of worship that will sometimes disable the spirit from any other kind of communion. Prayer is *The upward glancing of an eye,   
When none but God is near.*   
Oh, you who cannot speak, but yet have your eyesyou can look up and even in the look there shall be a prayer that God will regard, for He observes which way mens eyes go and, if their eyes are towards the hills, from where comes their help, He will bless them!   
Next, a moan may be a prayer. Notice this text, Jeremiah 31:18I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus. Moaning is rather the language of a cow than of a man, but, oh, that is a prayer that touches Gods heart! We cannot bear to hear a child moan. You mothers who have nursed a sick child at night, I know that it has gone to your heart when you have heard that which you cannot describe otherwise than as moaning. And oh, poor troubled Sinner, if you cannot pray, but can only get alone and moan, that is good praying! See how Hezekiah prayed when he was sickhis praying was of this kind, according to Isaiah 38:14Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn like a dove. You know how a dove coos and how pathetic is the mourning of a dove bereaved of its mate. That is good praying and though to you it seems like chattering and only making a poor, silly, bird-like noise, it is true prayer when the heart is in it!   
I am laboring with all my might to bring these things before you that you may see how simple a matter prayer is, so long as the heart is right with God. So notice, next, that prayer is a sigh. Psalm 80:11Let the sighing of the prisoner come before you. Further, it is a groan. Psalm 102:19, 20From Heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner. The very best prayer out of Heaven is a groan! Remember Romans 8:26? The Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be utteredgroans with such unutterable pain about them that they are not to be fully expressed in words! These are the very intercessions of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, our groans are among the very best of prayers!   
There is another form of prayer that David was accustomed to use and that was spreading out his hands. Psalm 88:9I have stretched out my hands unto You. And, in another place, Psalm 143:6I stretch forth my hands unto You. Sometimes he stood in prayer in this way, as if his heart was saying, I need to get the blessing. I long to receive it. I am reaching out to You, my God, for it. How often have I seen a sick man pray like this when he could not do anything else, for words had gone and the mouth was stopped and choked, and the brow was covered with a clammy sweat! That is the sort of prayer that God will hear. O Sirs, you may go through your liturgies as many times as you please and, perhaps, there may not be any prayer in them, after all! You may intone them and accompany them with all the music of your choirs and your organsand they may fall flat as death before the Throne of God! But a true penitent who gets alone in his agony and does but groan, or stretch out his hands, or glance his eyes to Heaven, shall never be refused by the great Father above!   
There is one other kind of prayerthere may be a great many more but this must suffice for the present. David says, in Psalm 6:8, The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. There, again, is wondrous power, as if the tears that fell from penitent and earnest eyes were treasured up in the tear bottle of God. Every tear from His childrens hearts will go to the heart of the great Father and He will answer the requests of our tears. There is a salt about the tear of a seeking soul that is pleasant to God. If your tears burn their way down your cheeks, they will burn their way into the heart of Godand you shall get the blessing that you desire.   
Now, after all this, I think that I may add that there is nobody here who dares to say that if he wills to pray, he cannot pray. If there is true prayer in his heart, the expression of it is so simple, so varied, so easy, that everyone must be capable of it! And I do pray that many here may feel that it is not so much how they come, or with what they come, as that if they do but come with the heart, God will receive them! Dear Hearts, will you not come? I wonder whether I am right in the reflection I sometimes make after I have been preaching? I sometimes say to myself, I think that if I had heard that sermon when I was seeking the Savior, I would have found Him. I do not know how to put Christs love more plainly, or give the invitation more simply. I wonder that souls do not come and yet I know that you will not come unless my Master draws you! But, surely, He will draw you! He is drawing you! Breathe a prayer to Him. He who refuses to pray deserves to be lost. He who knows that God will hear a cry, a breath, a groan, a moan, a panting and will not put up any of theseah, well, what shall I say of him? Are you choosing your own damnation? Do you really mean to be ruined forever? Do not so, I pray you! God help you to come, now, to the great Father and to find joy and peace in Him! For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel? 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.   
May He turn you, and bless you, and save you, for His great mercys sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY CHARLES H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 15.**

Verse 1. Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. It was a motley groupall the publicans and sinnersthe riff-raff, the scum, as people sometimes call them. All the publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus for to hear Him.

2. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receives sinners, and eats with them. See, they said, what kind of a ministry this must be that attracts all these low people? In what a condition must be the mind of this Man who seems pleased to associate with such people as these!

3. And He spoke this parable unto them, saying.Our Saviors aim was to show them that the first objective of God is to find the lost, that His first thoughts are toward the guilty and the fallen that He may bless and save them. He spoke this parable unto them saying.

4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he finds it? Is not the shepherds first thought concerning the one lost sheep? For the time, anxiety about that lost one swallows up the consideration of the 99 that are in safe keeping! And he goes after that which is lost, until he finds it.

5, 6. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. He did not say, Rejoice with me over the 99 that were never lost, but, for the time, all his anxiety and, afterwards, all his joy, centered upon the lost one.

7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. The mercy of God shall seem, as it were, to swallow up every other attribute, and His great heart shall rejoice to the fullest over repenting sinners!

8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she loses one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she finds it. The womans candle and broom and eyes are all for this one lost piece of silver! She does not look, just now, at the other nine pieces. They are, at present, left in a safe place by themselves, and she is thinking only of this lost piece.

9. And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. She does not rejoice one half so distinctly and markedly over the nine pieces which were not lost, as she does over the one piece that had been lost, but now is found.

10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. Our Savior, you see, is still keeping on the same tack and showing that He was right in associating with the publicans and sinners, since He aimed at finding and reclaiming and saving them. He now goes on with a third most beautiful and instructive parable.

11-15. And He said, A certain man had two sons and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in need. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. That was the best the citizen of the far country could do for the prodigal! The devils best is always bad what must his worst be? If he sets his favorites the employment of feeding swine, what will he do with them when the time of his favor is over and they are forever in his power?

16. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. Here was the free and easy gentleman who had spent his thousands without a thought, and now, no man gave unto him. I do not know that this prodigal spent his living with harlotsthe Scripture does not say that he did. It was his elder brother who said that and he may have made out the case to be even worse than it was. He was simply a waster of his substance in riotous livingand that was bad enough. But I never find that the younger brother tried to set himself right and repudiate the slanderous accusation of the elder. It was not worthwhile for him to try to do so, for he was right with his father and he would get right with his elder brother, by-and-by. If you get right with God, my dear Friend, even if some Christian people should not believe in you, never mind about that! Even if they should think you worse than you have been, never mind! If you are right with God, you will be right with them in due time.

17. And when he came to himself.For he had journeyed into a far country and he had gone as far away from himself as he had gone from his father! But, when he came to himself.

17-22. He said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. But the father said to His servants.As much as to sayLet me hear no more of this, my Son! I cannot bear it. You break my heart with the story of your repentance. The father said to His servants.

22. Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. Dress him like a gentleman! Do not let it be seen that he ever was in ragsBring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.

23. And bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry. Do all that you can to make this poor broken heart happy again, to lift this poor fallen son into the sphere from which he has been away so long. Make him feel at home and let us eat, and be merry.

24. For this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. I have no information that they ever left off being merry. The Church of God never ceases to praise and bless the Lord for saved sinners. If you come to Christ, dear Friend, you will set bells a-ringing that will never leave off throughout eternity! They began to be merry.

25, 26. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. Perhaps he was not very musical and did not care much for joy and delight. He may have been a hard-working, plodding man, but not a happy one.

27, 28. And he said unto him, Your brother is come; and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and entreated him. I scarcely know where the fathers love is the more seen in falling on the neck of the younger son, or in going out to entreat this elder son who was in a pet because the returned prodigal had been welcomed so kindly.

29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do 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. He seems to say, I have had no joy of religion. I have been a good, steady, moral person, but my soul has had no high delights.

30. But as soon as this, your son, was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf. Not even a little lamb or kid of the goats for me, but a fatted calf for him! So some still say, There has been a revival and some of the worst people in the parish have been brought to Christ. But we, who have always gone to church and always were moral and upright, have not had half the joy of these new converts. No fuss has been made over usall the rejoicing is over the returning prodigals. Do you see your portraits, any of you? If so, may you soon be set right by the only One who can make you what you ought to be!

31. And he said unto him, Son, you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours. Everything I have is yours. If you have not had the kid you spoke of, it was your own faultyou might have taken it if you had pleased. The whole house is at your disposal. I never denied you anything. All that I have is yours.

32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad. See, the younger son did not speak for himselfthere was no need for him to do so. His father spoke for him. What a blessed Intercessor, what a wondrous Advocate we have with our elder Brother! We may well leave them alone, ourselves, for He will bring them rightIt was meet that we should make merry and be glad.

32. For this your brother, was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.  
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK551, 607, 571. 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 #1204 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE RECEPTION OF SINNERS   
NO. 1204

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 22, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand,   
and shoes on his feet: And bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry.   
Luke 15:22, 23.**

LAST Lords-Day we spoke upon the consecration of priests. That theme might seem too high for troubled hearts and trembling consciences who fear that they shall never be made priests and kings unto God. So glorious a privilege appears to them to hang in the dim, distant future, if, indeed, they reach it at all. Therefore, at this time, we will go down from the elevated regions to comfort those who are seeking the Lordwith the view of helping them, in their turn, to climb, also!

We speak this morning, not of the consecration of priests, but of the reception of sinners, and this, according to our text, is a very joyful business. It is even described as a merrymaking, accompanied with music and with dancing. We, very frequently, speak of the sorrow for sin which accompanies conversion, and I do not think we can speak of it too often. But yet there is a possibility of our overlooking the equally holy and remarkable joy which attends the return of a soul to God. It has been a very common error to suppose that a man must pass through a very considerable time of despondency, if not of horror of mind, before he can find peace with God.

But in this parable the father seems determined to cut short that period. He stops his son in the very middle of his confession and, before he can ask to be made as one of the hired servants, his mournful style is changed to rejoicing, for the father has already fallen on his neck and kissed his trembling lips into a sweet silence! It is not the Lords desire that sinners should tarry long in the state of unbelieving conviction of sin. It is something wrong in themselves which keeps them thereeither they are ignorant of the freeness and fullness of Christ, they harbor selfrighteous hopesor they cling to their sins. Sin lies at the door but it is no work of God which blocks the way. He delights in their delight and joys in their joy!

It is the Fathers will that the penitent sinner should at once believe in Jesus, at once find complete forgiveness and enter into rest. If any of you came to Jesus without the dreary interval of terror which is so frequent, I pray you do not judge yourselves as though your conversions were dubiousthey are all the more, instead of all the less, genuine, because they bear, rather, the marks of the Gospel than of the Law! The weeping of Peter, which in a few days turns to joy, is far better than the horror of Judas which ends in suicide! Conversions, as recorded in Scripture, are, for the

most part, exceedingly rapid.

They were pricked in the heart at Pentecost and the same day baptized and added to the Church because they had found peace with God through Jesus Christ! Paul was struck down with conviction and in three days was a baptized Believer! Perhaps the figure is inapt, but I was about to say that sometimes Gods power is so very near us that the lightning flash of conviction is often attended at the very same moment by the deep thunder of the Lords voice which drives away our fears and proclaims peace and pardon to the soul! In many cases the sharp needle of the Law is immediately followed by the silken thread of the Gospelthe showers of repentance are succeeded at once by the sunshine of faithPeace overtakes Penitence and walks arm in arm with her into yet fuller rest!

Having thus reminded you that God would have penitents very soon rejoice, I want to spend this morning in setting forth the joy which is caused by pardoned sin. That joy is threefold. We will talk about it, first, as the joy of God over sinners. Secondly, the joy of sinners in God. And, thirdly, what is so often forgottenthe joy of the servantsfor they, too, rejoiced, for the father said, Let us eat and be merry. One of the points of the parable is just this, that as in the case of the lost sheep the shepherd calls together his friends and neighbors, and as in the case of the piece of money the woman calls her neighbors together, so in this case, also, others share in the joy which chiefly belongs to the loving father and the returning wanderer.

I. THE JOY OF GOD OVER SINNERS. It is always difficult to speak of the ever-blessed God becomingly when we have to describe Him as touched by emotions. I pray, therefore, to be guided in my speech by the Holy Spirit. We have been educated to the idea that the Lord is above emotions, either of sorrow or pleasure. That He cannot suffer, for instance, is always laid down as a self-evident postulate. Is that quite clear? Cannot He do or bear anything He chooses to do? What does the Scripture mean which says that mans sin, before the flood, made the Lord repent that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart?

Is there no meaning in the lords own language, Forty years long was I grieved with this generation? Are we not forbidden to grieve the Holy Spirit? Is He not described as having been vexed by ungodly men? Surely, then, He can be grievedit cannot be an altogether meaningless expression. For my part, I rejoice to worship the living God, who, because He is living, dose grieve and rejoice! It makes one feel more love to Him than if He dwelt on some serene Olympus, careless of all our woes because incapable of any concern about us, or interest in us, one way or the other. To look upon Him as utterly impassive and incapable of anything like emotion does not, in my mind, exalt the Lord, but rather brings Him down to be comparable to the gods of stone or wood which cannot sympathize with their worshippers.

No, Jehovah is not insensible! He is the living God and everything that goes with lifepure, perfect, holy lifeis to be found in Him. Yet must such a subject always be spoken of very tenderly, with solemn awe, because, albeit we know something of what God is, for we are made in the image of God and the best likeness of God undoubtedly was man as he came from his Makers hand, yet man is not God and, even in his perfectness, he must have been but a very tiny miniature of God! While now that he has sinned he has blotted and blurred that image.

The finite cannot fully mirror the Infinite, nor can the grand, glorious, essential properties of Deity be communicated to creaturesthey must remain peculiar to God, alone. The Lord is, however, continually represented as displaying joy. Moses declared to sinful Israel that if they returned and obeyed the voice of the Lord, the Lord would again rejoice over them for good as He rejoiced over their fathers (Deut. 30:9). The Lord is said to rejoice in His works and to delight in mercyand surely we must believe it! Why should we doubt it? Many passages of Scripture speak very impressively of Gods joy in His people.

Zephaniah puts it in the strongest manner: He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing. Our God is forever the happy or blessed God. We cannot think of Him as other than supremely blessed. Still, from the Scriptures we gather that He displays, on certain occasions, a special joy which He would have us recognize. I do not think that it can be mere parable, but it is real fact, that the Lord does rejoice over returning and repenting sinners. Every being manifests its joy according to its nature and seeks means for its display suitable to itself. It is so with men.

When the old Romans celebrated a triumph because some great general returned a victor from Africa, Greece, or Asia with the spoils of a long campaign, how did the fierce Roman nature express its joy? Why, in the Coliseum, or in some yet more vast amphitheatre where buzzing nations choked the ways! They gathered in their myriads to behold not only beasts, but their fellow men, butchered to make a Roman holiday. Cruelty upon an extraordinary scale was their way of expressing the joy of their iron hearts. Look at the self-indulgent man! He has had a prosperous season and has made a lucky hit, as he calls it, or some event has occurred in his family which makes him very jubilant. What will he do to show forth his joy? Will he bow the knee in gratitude, or lift a hymn of praise? Not he! He will hold a drinking bout and, when he and his fellows are mad with wine, his joy will find expression! The sensual show their joy by sensuality.

Now, God whose name is Good, and whose Nature is Lovewhen He has joyexpresses it in mercy, in lovingkindness and Grace. The fathers joy in the parable before us showed itself in the full forgiveness accorded in the kiss of perfect love bestowed, in the gift of the best robe, the ring, the sandals and in the gladsome festival which filled the whole house with hallowed mirth! Everything expresses its joy according to its nature. Infinite Love, therefore, reveals its joy in acts of love. The Nature of God being as much above ours as the Heaven is above the earththe expression of His joy is, therefore, all the loftier and His gifts the greater. But there is a likeness between Gods way of expressing joy and ours which it will be profitable to note.

How do we express ourselves, ordinarily, when we are glad? We do so very commonly by a display of bounty. When, in the olden times, our kings came into the city of London, or a great victory was celebratedthe conduit in Cheapside ran with red wine and even the gutters flowed with it! Then there were tables set in the street and My Lords, and the aldermen, and the mayor kept open house and everybody was fed to the full. Joy was expressed by hospitality. You have seen the picture of the young heir coming of age and have noticed how the artist depicts the great yard of the manor as full of men and women who are eating and drinking to their hearts content.

At Christmas seasons and upon marriage days and harvest homes, men ordinarily express their joy by bountiful provision. So also does the father, in this wondrous parable, exhibit the utmost bounty, representing, thereby, the boundless liberality of the great Father of spirits who shows His joy over penitents by the manner in which He entertains them. The best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf and the, Let us eat and be merry, all show, by their bountifulness, that God is glad! His oxen and His fatlings are killed, for the feast of Mercy is the banquet of the Lord! So unrivalled are the gifts of His gracious hand that the receivers of His favors have cried out in amazement, Who is a God like unto You!

Beloved, consider, awhile, the Lords bounty to returning sinners, blotting out their sins like a cloud and like a thick cloud their iniquities justifying them in the Righteousness of Christ, endowing them with His Holy Spirit, regenerating them, comforting them, illuminating them, purifying them, strengthening them, guiding them, protecting them, filling them with all His own fullness, satisfying their mouth with good things and crowning them with tender mercies. I see, in the bounty of God with which He so liberally endows returning sinners, a mighty proof that His inmost soul rejoices over the salvation of men!

At glad times men generally manifest some specialty in their bounty. On the day of the young heirs coming of age the long-stored cask of wine is broached and the best bullock is roasted whole. So here in the parable we read, Bring forth the best robe, indicating that it had been laid by and kept in store until then. Nobody had used that robe. It was locked up in the wardrobe, only to be brought out on some very special occasion. This was the happiest day that ever had made glad the house and, therefore, Bring forth the best robe. No other will suffice! If meat is needed for the banquet, let a calf be killed. Which shall it be? A calf taken at random from the herd? No, but the fatted calf which has been standing in the stalls and is well fedand has been reserved for a festival!

Oh, Beloved, when God blesses a sinner He shows His joy by giving him the reserved mercies, the special treasures of everlasting love, the precious things of Divine Grace, the secret of the Covenantyes, He has given to sinners the best of the best in giving them Christ Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! The best that Heaven affords, God bestows on sinners when they come to Him. No scraps and odds and ends are dealt out to hungry and thirsty seekers, but in princely munificence of unstinting love the heavenly Father deals out abundant Grace! I would that sinners would come and try my Lords hospitality! They would find His table to be more richly loaded than even that of Solomon, though 30 oxen and a hundred sheep did not suffice for one days provision for the household of that magnificent sovereign!

If they would but come, even the largest-hearted among them would be wonder-struck as they saw how richly God supplied all their needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus

*Rags exchanged for costly treasure   
Shoe and ring and Heavens best robe!   
Gifts of love, which knows no measure;   
Who can tell the heart of God?   
All His loved ones His redeemed ones,   
Perfect are in His abode.*

We also shower our joy by a concentration of thought upon the object of it. When a man is carried away with joy, he forgets everything else and gives himself up to the one delight. David was so glad to bring back the Ark of the Lord that he danced before the Lord with all his might, being clad only with a linen ephod. He laid aside his stately garments and thought so little of his dignity that Michal sneered at him. He was so much absorbed in adoring his Lord that all regard to appearances was quite gone.

Observe well the parable and listen, as you hear the father say, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and let us eat and be merry, for this, my son, was dead and is alive again. The son, alone, is in the fathers eyes and the whole house must be ordered in reference to him. Nothing is to be thought of today but the long-lost son! He is paramount in the wardrobe, the jewel room, the farmyard, the kitchen and the banqueting chamber. He that was lostthat was deadhe, being found and alive, engrosses the whole of the fathers mind!

Sinner, it is wonderful how God sets all His thoughts on you according to His promise, I will set My eyes upon them for good, (Jer. 24:6). And again, I will watch over them to build and to plant says the Lord. The Lord thinks upon the poor and needy! His eyes are upon them and His ears are open to their cry! He thinks as much of each penitent sinner as if he were the only being in the universe! O Penitent, for you is the working of the Lords Providence to bring you home! For you the training of His ministers that they might know how to reach your heart! For you the gifts of the Spirit upon them that they might be powerful with your conscience! Yes, for you His Son, His eternal Son, once bleeding on the Cross, and now sitting in the highest heavens making intercession for you!

I saw, in Amsterdam, the diamond cutting, and I noticed great wheels, a large factory and powerful enginesand all the power was made to bear upon a small stone no larger than the nail of my little finger. All that huge machinery for that little stone, because it was so precious! I think I see you, poor insignificant sinners, who have rebelled against your God, brought back to your Fathers houseand now the whole universe is full of wheels and all those wheels are working together for your goodto make out of you a jewel fit to glisten in the Redeemers crown! God is not represented as saying more of Creation than, it was very good. But in the work of Grace He is described as singing for joy! He breaks the eternal silence and cries, My son is found!

As the philosopher, when he had compelled Nature to yield her secret, ran through the street crying, Eureka! Eureka! I have found it! I have found it! so does the Father dwell on the word, My son that was dead, is alive again, he that was lost is found. The whole of Scripture aims at the bringing back, again, of the Lords banished! For this the Redeemer leaves His Glory! For this the Church sweeps her house and lights her candle and when the work is done, all other bliss is secondary to the surpassing joy of the Lord, of which He bids His ransomed ones partake, saying Enter you into the joy of your Lord.

We also show our joy by an alacrity of motion. I quoted David just now. It was so with him. He danced before the ark. I cannot imagine David walking slowly before the ark, or creeping after it like a mourner at a funeral. I often notice the difference between your coming to this place and people going to other places of worship. I remark a very solemn, stately and somber motion in almost everybody elsebut you come tripping along as if you were glad to go up to the House of the Lord! You do not regard the place of our joyous assemblies as a sort of religious prison, but as the palace and banqueting house of the great King!

When anyone is joyous, he is sure to show it by the quickness of his motions. Listen to the fatherhe says, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring here the fatted calf, and let us eat and be merry. As quickly as possible he pours out sentence after sentence. There is no delayno interval between the commands. Might he not have said, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and let us look at him awhile, and sit down and prepare him for the next step. And in an hours time, or tomorrow, we will put a ring on his hand. And then, soon, we will put shoes on his feethe is best without shoes for the presentfor perhaps if he has shoes on, he will run away. As to the festival, perhaps we had better rejoice over him when we see whether his repentance is genuine. No, no, no! The fathers heart is too glad! He must bless his boy at once, heap on his favors and multiply his tokens of love!

When the Lord receives a sinner, He runs to meet him. He falls on his neck. He kisses him. He speaks to him. He forgives him! He justifies him! He sanctifies him! He puts him among the children. He opens the treasures of His Grace to himand all in quick succession. Within a few minutes after he has been cleansed from sin, the prodigal is robed and adorned, and shod for service! The love of our Redeemers heart made Him say to the poor thief, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. He would not let him linger in pain on the cross, but carried him away to Paradise in an hour or two. Love and joy are ever quick of foot. God is slow to anger, but He is so plenteous in His mercy that His Grace overflows and rushes on like a torrent when it leaps along the ravine.

Once more, the joy of the father was shown, as it often is, by open utterance. It is hard for a glad man to hold his tongue! What can dumb people do when they are very happy? I cannot imagine how they endure silence at such times. It must then be a terrible misfortune. When you are very happy you must tell somebody! So does this father. He pours out his joy and the utterance is very simple. My son was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and is found. Yet, simple as it is, it is poetry. The poetry of the Hebrews consisted in parallelism, or a repetition of the sense or a part of the words. Here are two lines which pair with each other and make a verse of Hebrew poetry. Glad men, when they speak naturally and simply, always say the right thing in the very best manner, using Natures poetry, as does the father here.

Note, also, that there is reiteration in his utterance. He might have been satisfied to say, This, my son, was dead and is alive again. No, the fact is so sweet he must repeat it, He was lost, and is found. Even thus we speak when we are very full of sweet content. The heart bubbles up with a good matter and over and over again we rehearse our joy. When the morsel is sweet, we roll it under the tongue. We cannot help it! So the Lord rejoices over sinners and tells His joy in Holy Scripture in varied phrases and metaphors. And though those Scriptures are simple in their style, yet they contain the very essence of poetry.

The bards of the Bible stand in the first rank among the sons of song! God Himself deigned to use poetry to utter His joy because a more prosaic manner would be all too cold and tame. Hear how He puts itAs the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people. We might have been left in the dark about this joy of God. We might have been coldly informed that God would save sinners and we might never have known that He found such joy in itbut the Divine Joy was too great to be concealed! The great heart of God could not restrain itselfHe must tell to all the universe the delight which the exercise of mercy brought to Him! It was meet that He should make merry and be glad and, therefore, He did it, for nothing that is meet to be done will ever be neglected by the Lord our God!

Thus, dear Friends, have I feebly spoken of the joy of God. And I want you to notice that it is a delight in which every attribute of God takes a share. Condescension ran to meet the son. Love fell on his neck. Grace kissed him. Wisdom clothed him. Truth gave him the ring. Peace shod him. Wisdom provided the feast and Power prepared it. No one attribute of the Divine Nature quarrels with the forgiveness and salvation of a sinner! Not one attribute holds back from the beloved employ. Power strengthens the weak and Mercy binds up the wounded. Justice smiles upon the justified sinner, for it is satisfied through the atoning blood. Truth puts forth her hand to guarantee that the promise of Grace is fulfilled.

Immutability confirms what has been done and Omniscience looks around to see that nothing is left undone. The whole of Deity is brought to bear upon a poor worm of the dust, to lift it up and transform it into an heir of God, joint-heir with the Only Begotten! The joy of God occupies the whole of being, so that when we think of it we may well say, Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name, since all that is within Him is engaged to bless His saints! This joy of the Lord should give every sinner great confidence in coming to God by Jesus

Christ, for if you would be glad to be saved, He will be glad to save you! If you long to lay your head in your Fathers bosom, your Fathers  
bosom longs to have it there! If you pant to say, I have sinned, He   
equally longs to say to you, by acts of love, I forgive you freely. If you   
pine to be His child in His own house once more, the door is open and He,   
Himself, is on the watch! Come and welcome! Come and welcome! No

more delay!   
II. I have now to speak of THE JOY OF THE SINNER. The son was glad.  
He did not express it in words, as far as I can see in the parable, but he  
felt it, none the less. Sometimes silence is discreet and it was so in this   
case. At other times it is absolutely forced upon you by inability to utter   
the emotionthis was also true of the prodigal. The sons heart was too   
full for utterance in words, but he had speaking eyes and a speaking  
countenance as he looked on that dear father. As he put on the robe, the   
ring and the shoes, he must have been too astonished to speak. He wept  
in showers that day, but the tears were not salted with griefthey were   
sweet tears, glittering like the dew of the morning.  
What do you think would make the son glad? Why, the fathers love,  
the fathers forgivenessand restoration to his old place in the fathers   
heart! That was the point. But then, each gift would serve as a token of  
that love and make the joy overflow. There was the robe put onthe dress  
of a son, and of a son well-beloved and accepted. Have you noticed how  
the robe answered to his confession? The sentences match each other   
thusFather, I have sinned.Bring forth the best robe and put it on  
him. Cover all his sins with Christs Righteousness! Put away his sin by   
imputing to him the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus.   
The robe also met his condition. He was in rags, therefore, Bring forth  
the best robe and put it on him, and you shall see no more of his rags. It   
was fit that he should be thus arrayed, in token of his restoration. He who   
is re-endowed with the privileges of a son should not be dressed in sordid  
clothes, but wear raiment suitable to his station. Moreover, as a festival   
was about to begin, he ought to wear a festive garment. It would not be   
seemly for him to feast and be merry in his rags. Put the best robe on him   
that he may be ready to take his place at the banquet. So, when the penitent comes to God, he is not only covered, as to the past, by the Righteousness of Christ, but he is prepared for the future blessedness which is   
reserved for the pardoned ones. Yes, he is fitted to begin the rejoicing at   
once!   
Then came the ring, a luxury rather than a necessity, except that now  
he was a son, it was well that he should be restored to all the honors of  
his relationship. The signet ring in the east, in former times, conferred   
great privilegesin those days men did not sign their names, but stamped   
with their signet, so that the ring gave a man power over property and   
made him a sort of other self to the man whose ring he wore. The father   
gives the son a ring, and how complete an answer was that gift to another   
clause of his confession. Let me read the two sentences together, I am no more worthy to be called your son. Put a ring on his hand. The gift pre  
cisely meets the confession!   
It also tallied with his change. How singular that the very hand which   
had been feeding swine should now wear a ring. I guarantee you there   
were no rings on his hands when they were soiled at the trough! But now   
he is a swine-feeder no longer! He is now an honored son of a rich father.   
Slaves wear no rings. Juvenal laughed at certain freed men because they  
were seen walking up and down the Via Sacra with conspicuous rings on  
their fingers, the emblems of their new-found liberty. The ring indicated  
the penitents liberty from sin and his enjoyment of the full privileges of  
his fathers house.   
O Beloved, the Lord will make you glad if you come to Him, by putting   
the seal of the Holy Spirits indwelling upon youwhich is both the earnest of the inheritance and the best adornment of the hand of your practical character! You shall have a sure and honorable token and shall know   
that all things are yours, whether things present, or things to come. This  
ring upon your finger will declare your marriage union to Christ, set forth   
the eternal love which the Father has fixed upon you, and be the abiding  
pledge of the perfect work of the Holy Spirit!   
Then they put shoes on his feet. I suppose he had worn out his own. In  
the East servants do not usually wear shoes at home, and especially in   
the best rooms of the house. The master and the son wear the sandals,  
but not the servants, so that this order was an answer to the last part of   
the penitents prayer, Make me as one of your hired servants. No, says   
the father, put shoes on his feet. In the forgiven sinner, the awe which   
puts off its shoes is to be overmatched by the familiarity which wears the   
shoes which infinite love provides. The forgiven one is no longer to tremble   
at Sinai, but he is to come unto Mount Zionand to have familiar union   
and communion with God! Thus, also, the restored one was shod for filial   
servicehe could run upon his fathers errands, or work in his fathers   
fields. He had now, in every way, all that he could needthe robe that   
covered him, the ring that adorned himand the shoes that prepared him   
for travel or labor.   
Now you awakened and anxious ones who are longing to draw near to  
God, I would that this description of the joy of the prodigal would induce   
you to come at once! Come, you naked, and He will say, Bring forth the  
best robe! Come, you that see your natural deformity through sin, and He  
will adorn you with a ring of beauty! Come, you who feel as if you could   
not come, for you have bleeding, weary feet, and He will shoe you with the   
silver sandals of His Divine Grace! Only come and you shall have such joy  
in your hearts as you have never dreamed of! There shall be a young  
Heaven born within your spirit which shall grow and increase until it  
comes to the fullness of bliss.   
III. The time has now come for us to dwell upon THE JOY OF THE   
SERVANTS. They were to be merry and they were merry, for the music   
and the dancing which were heard outside could not have proceeded from  
one person only! There must have been many to join in it and who should these be but the servants to whom the father gave his commands? They  
ate, they drank, they danced, they joined in the music!   
There are many of us, here, who are the servants of our own heavenly  
Father. Though we are His children, we delight to be His servants. Now,   
whenever a sinner is saved, we have our share of joy. We have joy, first, in  
the Fathers joy. They were so glad because their lord was gladgood servants are always pleased when they see that their master is greatly gratified. And I am sure the Lords servants are always joyous when they feel  
that their Lord is well-pleased. That servant who went out to the elder  
brother, showed, by his language that he was in sympathy with the father,   
for he pleaded with the son upon the matter.   
And when you are in sympathy with God, my dear Brother or Sister, if   
the Lord lets you see poor sinners saved, you must and will rejoice with   
Him! It will be to you better than finding a purse full of money, or making   
a great gain in business! Yes, nothing in the world can give you more delight than to see some brother of yours or some child of yours made to rejoice in Christ! A mother once beautifully said, I remember the new and   
strange emotions which trembled in my breast when, as an infant, he was   
first molded to my heartmy first-born child. The thrill of that moment  
still lingersbut when he was born again, clasped in my arms a new   
creature in Christ Jesus, my spiritual child, my son in the Gospel, pardoned, justified, adopted, saved, forever saved! Oh! It was the very depth  
of joy! Joy unspeakable! My child was a child of God! The prayers which   
preceded his birth, which cradled his infancy, which girdled his youth   
were answered! My son was Christs! The weary watching, the yearning   
desires, the trembling hopes of years were at rest! Our first-born son was   
avowedly the Lords.   
May every father and mother here know just such joy by having sympathy with God. But they had sympathy with the son. I am sure they rejoiced to see him back again, for somehow, usually even bad sons have the   
goodwill of good servants. When young men go away and are a great grief   
to their fathers, the servants often stick to them. They will say, Well,   
Master John was very inconsiderate and he vexed his father a great deal,   
but I should like to see the poor boy back again. Especially is this true of  
the old servants who have been in the house since the boy was bornthey   
never forget him. And you will find that Gods old servants are always glad   
when they see prodigal children return! They are delighted beyond measure, because they love them, notwithstanding their wanderings. Sinner, with all your faults and hardness of heart, we do love you and   
we should be glad, for your sake, to see you delivered from eternal ruin  
and from the wrath of God, which now abides on you, and brought to rejoice in pardoned sin and acceptance in the Beloved! We would rejoice for  
the sinners sake, but I think the servants rejoiced most of all when they  
were the instruments in the fathers hand of blessing the son. Just look at  
this. The father said to the servants, Bring forth the best robe. He might   
have gone to the wardrobe, himself, with a key, and opened it, and   
brought out the robe himself. But he gave them the pleasure of doing it. When I get my orders from my Lord and Master on the Lords-Day  
morning to bring forth the best robe, I am delighted, indeed! Nothing delights me more than to preach the Imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ   
and the substitutionary sacrifice of our exalted Redeemer! Bring forth the  
best robe. Why, my Master, I might be content to keep out of Heaven if  
You would always give me this work to doto bring forth the best robe   
and extol and exalt Jesus Christ in the eyes of the people!   
Then he said, Put it on him. When our Lord gives us Divine Grace to   
do that, there is still more joy! How many times I have brought forth the   
best robe, but could not put it on you! I have held it up and expatiated on  
its excellenciesand pointed to your rags and said what a delightful thing

it would be if I could put it on youbut I could not. But when the heavenly Father, by His Divine Grace and the power of the Spirit, makes us   
the means of bringing these treasures into the possession of poor sinners,   
oh, what joy! I should rejoice to bring forth the ring of the Spirits sealing   
work and the shoes of the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, for it is a joy   
to exhibit these blessings and a greater joy, still, to put them upon the   
poor, returning wanderer!   
God be thanked for giving His servants so great a pleasure! I would not  
have dared to describe the Lords servants as putting on the robe, the ring  
and the shoesbut as He has, Himself, done so, I am rejoiced to use the   
Holy Spirits own language! How sweet was the command, Put it on him.  
Yes, put it on the poor trembling, ragged, shivering sinner! Put it on him,   
even on him, though he can hardly believe such mercy to be possible. Put   
it on him? Yes, on him. He who was a drunk, a swearer, an adulterer?   
Yes, put it on him, for he repents! What joy it is when we are enabled, by  
Gods commission, to throw that glorious mantle over a great sinner! As   
for the ring, put it on him! That is the beauty of it. And the shoes, put  
them on him. That they are for him is the essence of our joythat such a   
sinner, and especially when he is one of our own householdshould receive these gifts of Divine Grace is wonderful!   
It was most kind of the father to divide the labor of love. One would put   
on the robe, another the ring and a third the shoes. Some of my Brothers   
can gloriously preach Jesus Christ in His Righteousness and they put on  
the best robe. Others seem most gifted in dwelling upon the work of the  
Spirit of God, and they put on the ring. While yet another class are practical Divines, and they put on the shoes. I do not mind which I have to do, if   
I may but have a part in helping to bring to poor sinners those matchless   
gifts of Grace which, at infinite expense, the Lord has prepared for those   
who come back to Him!   
How glad those were who helped to dress him, I cannot tell. Meanwhile,  
another servant was gone off out of doors to bring in the fatted calf and   
perhaps two or three were engaged in killing and dressing it, while another was lighting a fire in the kitchen and preparing the spits for the   
roast. One laid the table and another ran to the garden to bring flowers to   
make wreaths for the roomI know I should have done that if I had been   
there. All were happy! All ready to join in the music and dancing. Those   
who work for the good of sinners are always the most glad when they are saved! You who pray for them, you who teach them, you who preach to   
them, you who win them for Christyou shall share in their merriment! Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, we are told that they began to be   
merry, and according to the description it would seem that they were   
merry, indeed, but still they only began. I see no intimation that they   
ever left off. They began to be merry, and as merriment is apt to grow  
beyond all bounds when it once starts, who knows what they have come   
to by this time? The saints begin to be merry now and they will never  
cease, but rejoice evermore. On earth all the joy we have is only beginning  
to be merryit is up in Heaven that we get into full swing! Here our best  
delight is hardly better than a near tide at its ebb. There the joy rolls   
along in the majesty of a full spring tide   
*Oh what rapturous hallelujahs   
In our Fathers home above!   
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!   
Oer the embraces of His love!   
Wondrous welcome   
Gods own welcome,   
May the chief of sinners prove.   
Sweet melodious strains ascending,   
All around a mighty flood;   
Servants, friends, with joy attending   
Oh! the happiness of God!   
Grace abounding, all transcending,   
Through a Saviors precious blood.*   
Let us begin to be merry this morning! But we cannot unless we are laboring for the salvation of others in all ways possible to us. If we have  
done and are doing that, let us praise and bless the Lord and rejoice with   
the reclaimed ones. And let us keep the feast as Jesus would have it kept,  
for I hope there is no one here of the elder brethren who will be angry and   
refuse to go in. Let us continue to be merry, as long as we live, because   
the lost are found and the dead are made alive! God grant you to be  
merry, on this account, world without end. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 15:11-32.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK548, 1002, 1004. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERA STEWARD   
NO. 192

A SERMON DELIVERED ON TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 4, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.   
AT BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL,   
ON BEHALF OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION   
Give an account of your stewardship.   
Luke 16:2.

WE have heard many times in our lives that we are all stewards to Almighty God. We hold it as a solemn truth of our religion that the rich man is responsible for the use which he makes of his wealth. The talented man must give an account to God of the interest which he gets upon his talents. Everyone of us, in proportion to our time and opportunities, must give an account for himself before Almighty God. But, my dear Brothers and Sisters, our responsibility is even deeper and greater than that of other men. We have the ordinary responsibility which falls upon all professors of religion to give an account of all we have to God. But besides this, you and I have the extraordinary responsibilities of our official standingyou, as teachers for Christ in your classes. And others of us as preachers for Him before the great congregation.

The first responsibility is too heavy for any man to fulfill. Apart from Divine grace, it is not possible that any man should so use all that God has given him as to be accepted at last with a, Well done you good and faithful servant. Yet even if that were possible, it would still remain an utter impossibility for us fully to sustain the fearful weight of responsibility which rests upon us as teachers of the Word of God to our fellow immortals. Upon our necks there are two yokessovereign grace can make them light and easy, but apart from that they will gall our shoulders. For they are, of themselves, too heavy for us to bear.

Common responsibility is as Solomons whip. But extraordinary responsibility derived from official standing, when not regarded, will be as the scorpion of Rehoboamits little finger shall be thicker than its fathers loins. Woe unto the watchman who warns them not! Woe unto the minister who fails to teach the Truth! Woe unto the Sunday school teacher who is unfaithful to his trust! Now, let us try to stir one another up upon this seriously important matter. You will pray for me while I preach, that I may utter some things that may do good to all now present and I will labor that God may, in answer to your prayers, give me words and thoughts which shall be blessed to you.

Now first, let me show the meaning of our being stewards. Then let us consider what kind of account we shall have to give. And lastly, let us notice the days of reckoning when we OUGHT to cast up our account and the days of reckoning when we MUST give in our account.

I. First, then, THE STEWARDWHAT IS HE? In the first place, the steward is a servant. He is one of the greatest of servants. But he is only a servant. Perhaps he is the bailiff of a farm and looks, to all intents and purposes, like a country farmerhe rides over his masters estate and has many men under him. Still he is only a servanthe is under authorityhe is only a steward. Perhaps he is steward in the house of some gentleman who employs him to see after the whole of his establishment in order that he may be free from cares in that capacity. He is himself a master, but still he is a servant. For he has one over him.

Let him be as proud as he pleases, he has little to be proud offor the rank he holds in life is the rank of a servant. Now, the minister and the Sunday school teacher specially stand in the rank of servants. We are none of us our own masters. We are not independent gentlemen who may do as we please! Our classes are not our own farms which we may till in our own manner and neglect if we please. They are not such that we may produce any harvest, or none at all, at our own discretion. No, we are nothing better than stewards and we are to labor for our Master in Heaven. What a strange thing it is to see a minister or a teacher giving himself fine airs, as if he were somebody in the world and might do as he pleased. Is it not an anomaly?

How is he to talk about the sacrifices that he makes when he is spending only his masters property? How is he to boast about the time which he expends when his time is not his own? It is all his Masters. He is a servant and therefore, do what he may, he only discharges the duty for which he is well rewarded. He has no reason to be proud or to lord it over others, for whatever his power among them may be, he is himself neither more nor less than a servant. Let each of us try to remember that. I am only a servant.

If a superintendent puts a teacher in a class which she does not like, she will remember that she is a servant. She does not allow her servants at home to stand up and say they are not going to do the dishes but will only wait on tables. They are servants and must do as they are told. And if we felt that we were servants, we should not object to do what we are told for Christs sake though we would not do it at the dictation of menyet for Christs sake we do it as unto the Lord.

We do not suppose that our servants will come to us at night and expect us to say to them, You have done your work very well today. We do not imagine that they will look for constant commendation. They are servants and when they get their wages that is their praise for their work. They may judge they are worth their money, or else we should not keep them. When you do your work for Jesus, remember you are only a servant. Do not expect always to have that encouragement which some people are constantly crying after.

If you get encouragement from your pastor or from other teachers or from your friends, be thankful. But if you do not, go on with your work notwithstanding. You are a servant and when you receive your reward, that is of grace and not of debt. Then you will have the highest praises that can be passed upon youthe plaudits of your Lord and eternity with Him whose you are and whom you desire to serve.

But still while the steward is a servant, he is an honorable one. It does not do for the other servants in the house to tell him that he is a servant. He will not endure thathe knows it and feels it. He desires to act and work as such, but at the same time he is an honored servant. Now, those who serve Christ in the office of teaching are honorable men and women. I remember to have heard a very unseemly discussion between two persons as to whether the minister was not superior to the Sunday school teacher. It reminded me of that talk of the disciples, as to who among them was the greatest.

Why, we are all of us the least, if we feel aright and though we must each of us exalt our office as God has given it to us, yet I see not anywhere in the Bible anything that should lead me to believe that the office of the preacher is more honorable than that of the teacher. It seems to me that every Sunday school teacher has a right to put Reverend before his name as much as I have, or if not, if he discharges his trust, he certainly is a Right Honorable. He teaches his congregation and preaches to his class. I may preach to more and he to less, but still he is doing the same work, though in a smaller sphere.

I am sure I can sympathize with Mr. Carey, when he said of his son Felix, who left the missionary work to become an ambassador, Felix has driveled into an ambassadormeaning to say, that he was once a great person as a missionary but that he had afterwards accepted a comparatively insignificant office. So I think we may say of the Sunday school teacher, if he gives up his work because he cannot attend to it on account of his enlarged businesshe drivels into a rich merchant. If he forsakes his teaching because he finds there is so much else to do, he drivels into something less than he was before.

There is one exceptionif he is obliged to give up to attend to his own family and makes that family his Sunday school class. There is no driveling there. He stands in the same position as he did before. I say they who teach, they who seek to pluck souls as brands from the burning are to be considered as honored personssecond only to Him from whom they received their commission. But still in some sweet sense lifted up to become fellows with Him, for He calls them His Brethren and His friends. The servant knows not what his Lord does, but I have called you Friends, for all things I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.

Only one more thought here. The steward is also a servant who has very great responsibility attached to his position. A sense of responsibility seems to a right man always a weighty thing. To do a thing where there is no responsibility involved at all is a very slight matter and hence we find in ordinary affairs that the labor which involves no trust is but poorly paid. But where there is a large amount of trust reposed the labor is paid in proportion. Now the work of the Sunday school teacher is one of the most responsible in the world. It has sometimes staggered me to think how greatly God trusts you and me.

You remember the story of the prodigal. It finds a counterpart in each of us, who after long wandering in sin have come home to Jesus. I sometimes think that a prudent father, when the prodigal was restored to his house, could receive him to his heart, would press him to his bosom and give him a share of all his wealth. But he would be very slow to trust him in any matter of responsibility. The next market-day the old gentlemen would say, Now John, I love you with all my heart, but you know you ran away once and spent your living riotously. I must send your elder brother to market. I cannot trust you with my purseI love you. I have totally forgiven you but at the same time I cannot yet rely upon you.

Why does not God say so to us? Instead of that, when He takes poor prodigals to His heart, He trusts us with His most precious jewelsHe trusts us with immortal souls. He permits us to be the means of seeking His lost sheep and then allows us to feed the lambs after they are gathered. He puts the prodigal into the most important station and has confidence in him. Then, my Brothers and Sisters, seeing He has been gracious enough to repose confidence in such unworthy persons, shall we deceive Him? Oh nolet us earnestly labor as stewards that every part of the estate committed to us shall be found in good order when our Master comes. That every jot and tittle of our account shall be found correct when He sums it up in the great day of the audit before His Throne.

Our office is a very, very solemn one. Some think little of it. Some take it upon themselves very lightly. Giddy youths are enticed into the school and not rendered more sober by their connection with it. Let such depart from us. We want none but those who are sober, none but those who solemnly weigh what they are doing. We want those who enter upon the work as a matter involving life or deathnot as a trivial affair which concerns the interests of timebut an awfully solemn thing which even an angel would be incapable of performing, unless he had the abundant assistance of God the Holy Spirit. I have thus endeavored very simply to set forth the idea couched in the word stewardship. We are servants highly honored, very responsible and much trusted.

II. And now, THE ACCOUNTGive an account of your stewardship. Let us briefly think of this giving an account of our stewardship.   
Let us first notice that when we shall come to give an account of our stewardship before God, that account must be given personally, by each of us. While we are here, we talk in the mass. But when we come before God, we shall have to speak as individuals. You hear persons boasting about our Sunday school. Many persons are wicked enough to call the Sunday school their school, when they never see it in a years time. They say, I hope our school is flourishing, when they never subscribe a half-penny, when they never give the teachers a word of encouragement, or even a smile and do not know how many children the school contains.   
Yet they call it theirs. Thieves that they are, taking to themselves that which does not belong to them! But we, in our measure, make the same mistake. As a ministry, we often talk of the doings of the body, and what wonders have been done by the denomination. Now, let us remember, when we come before God, there will be no judging us in denominations, no dealing with us in schools and in churchesthe account must be given for each one by himself. So, then, you that have the infant class, you will have to give your own account. It was but the other day you were finding fault with the conduct of the senior class and you were told then to look at home. Conscience told you so.   
But at last, when you shall have to stand before God, you will have no account to give of the senior class, but of that infant class committed to you. And you, my Sister, you have been seven or eight years a teacheryou must give an account for yourself, not for that other teacher of another class of whom you have often boasted, because she has been the means of bringing six or seven children to Christ lately.   
Remember, her six wont be put with your none at all, in order to make the total at the years end look respectable. But there will stand your great blank at the end of your labors and there will remain the dark mark for your negligence, for your unpunctuality, your carelessness in your class, without the relief of the bright side of the diligent teachers success. You must be judged each of you for yourself, not in parties, but one by one. This makes it terrible workfor a man to be looked at all alone.   
I have known people who could not bear to stand up in a pulpit. The very fact of so many eyes looking upon them seemed so horrible But how will it be when we must stand up and hear our hearts read by the all-searching eye of God? When the whole of our career in the offices which we now hold will be published before the sun and thatI repeat itwithout the salvo of the success of others, without any addition to our labors derived from the diligence of other teachers?   
Come, Mr. Steward, what is your account? Not that one, Sir, not that oneyour account. Lord, I have brought in the account of the Sunday school books. No, not that, the account of your own class? Well, my Master, I have brought in the account of the class for the last twentyfive years, showing how many were converted. No, not that. The account of your own class while you were its teacher. Well, I have brought in the account of the class during the time I was teacher with So-and-So. No, not that. The account of the class while you were the teacher of it alonethe account of how you taught what you taught, how you prayed, how earnestly you labored, how diligently you studied, and what you sought to do for Christ.   
Not the accomplishments of the other teacher who helped you in another part of the duty, but your own personal account alone must be brought in before God. Give an account of your stewardship. Putting it in this light, what account will some of you give at the last and great day? Just let me stop a minute to charge your memories. What kind of account will it be? I trust a very large number here can humbly in their hearts say, I have done but little, but I did that sincerely and prayerfully. May God accept it through Jesus Christ!   
But I fear there are some others, who, if they are true to their consciences, will say, I have done but little. I did that little carelessly. I did it without prayer. I did it without the help of the Holy Spirit. Then, my Brother and Sister, I hope you will add after that, Oh, my God, forgive me and help me from this good hour to be diligent in this Divine business, fervent in my spirit, serving the Lord. And may God bless you in that prayer! Make no resolution, but offer a

prayer which is far better. And may you be heard in Heaven, the dwelling place of God.   
And note again, that while this account must be personal it must be exact. You will not, when you present your account before God, present the gross total, but every separate item. When you give your account of your stewardship, it will be thus. You had so many children. What did you say to this child and to this and to this and to the other? How often did you pray for that child with his bitter temper? For that child with his unbending obstinacy? For that child with its quickness and its sweet affection? For that child, that sulky one? For that child, the headstrong, vicious one that had learned all the evils of the street and seemed to taint others?   
What did you do for each one of these? How did you labor for the conversion of each one? And to make the account still more particular it will run thusWhat did you do for each child on each Sabbath? You heard one child utter an ill worddid you reprove it? You saw another child oppress a little onedid you deliver the less out of his hand and reprove him and teach both children to love each other? Did you notice the follies of each and strive to understand the temperament of each so that you should fit your discourse or your prayer to each? Did you travail as in birth for the conversion of each one?   
Did you agonize in prayer with God and then did you agonize in exhortation with them, beseeching them to be reconciled to Christ? I believe the account will be far more minute than this, when God shall come to try our hearts and reins as well as our works and ways. My poor way of putting it does but becloud the truth which I seek to bring forth, but nevertheless so shall it bea special and exact account shall be given. And then there shall be an account given for every opportunitynot only for every child, but for every opportunity of doing good to the child.   
Did you avail yourself of that afternoon when the child was in a peculiarly solemn frame because his little brother lay at home dead? Did you seek to send the arrows home when Providence had made a wound in his little heart because he had lost his dear mother? Did you seek to turn every event which occurred in the school to account, whether it was joyous or the reverse? God gave you the opportunity and He will at last ask you what you did with it. We shall many of us make but a sorry account, for we have neglected much that we ought to have done. And the general confession must be ours as teachers, We have done those things which we ought not to have done and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done.   
And then remember, the account will be exact as to everything that we did. We shall not only be examined as to how we addressed the school. We may have had peculiar gifts for that and we may have done well. It will be, How did you address your own class? and not that alone, but, How did you study the lessons? If you had no time it will not be required of you to do what you could not do, but if you had much leisure how did you spend it? Was it for your children, for your Masters good, that you might find polished shafts to shoot forth from your bowthat God might bless youby giving you strength to send them home into the heart?   
And then, what did you do in your closet? Were you cold and careless there? Were your children forgotten, or did you bring them on your heart and in your arms and with tears and cries commend them to Christ? Ah, Sunday school teachers, your closet shall be turned into the open air one day and the contents of your secret chambers be published before the sun. Oh, you whose cob-webbed closets witness against you! Oh, you against whom the beam out of the wall exclaims because your voice has not been heard there, against whom the very floor might bear witness, because it has never felt the weight of your kneeshow will you stand this searching test? How will you endure this day of burning, when God shall try you for everything you did and everything you did not do which you ought to have done, in connection with the work of teaching your children? The account must be exact and precise, as well as personal. I shall not stop to enlarge upon that. Your own conscience and judgment can enlarge upon it at home.   
Now, remember, once again, that the account must be complete. You will not be allowed to leave out something, you will not be allowed to add anything. Perhaps some of you would like to begin with tomorrow, or next Sabbath and strike out the past. No, Sunday school teacher, when God says, Give an account of your stewardship, you will have to begin with the day when you first were a teacher. Ah, my God, how many there are who profess to preach the Word, who might well beg that you would let many a year of their ministry be buried in forgetfulness! Ah, might not some of us fall upon our knees and say, Lord, let me give account of my diligent years, not of my idle years!   
But we must begin with our ordination. We must end with our death and you must begin with the first hour when you sat down in your class. And you must end when life ends and not till then. Does not this put a very solemn aspect upon your account, some of you? You are always saying, I will be better tomorrow. Will that blot out yesterday? I must be more diligent in future. Will that redeem the lost opportunities which have departed in the years gone by? No if you have loitered long and lingered much, you will find the hardest running of today will not make up for the loitering of yesterday.   
There have been some men who, after spending many years in sin, have been doubly diligent for Christ afterwards, but they have always felt that they have only done the days work in the day and they mourned over those years which the locusts had eaten, as gone beyond recall. Oh, catch the moments as they fly, Sunday school teachers! Use the days as they come. Do not be talking about making up for the badness of the first part of the account by the brilliant character of the conclusion.   
You cannot do it. You must give an account for each day separately, for each year by itself. And do what you may to retrieve your losses, the losses still stand upon the book and the Master will say, at last, How came these here? And, though they are all covered up in Sovereign Grace, if you believe in Christ Jesus, yet you would not wish to have any the more stains for that. Because Christ has washed you, you do not desire to make yourself filthy. Because He has atoned you do not desire to commit sin. No, live, my Brothers and Sisters, as Sunday school teachers should live. Live as if your own salvation depended upon the strictness of your fulfilling your duty. And yet remember your salvation does not depend upon that, but on your personal interest in the Everlasting Covenant and in the all-prevailing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Israels Strength and Redeemer.   
III. And now, though there are many other things I might say, I fear lest I might weary you. Therefore, let me notice some occasions when it will be WELL for you all to give an account of your stewardship. And then notice when you MUST give an account of it.   
You know there is a proverb, that short reckonings make long friends, and a very true proverb it is. A man will always be at friendship with his conscience as long as he makes short reckonings with it. It was a good rule of the old Puritans, that of making frank and full confession of sin every night. They did not leave a weeks sin to be confessed on Saturday night, or Sabbath morning. They recalled the failures, imperfections and mistakes of each day in order that they might learn from one day of failure how to achieve the victory on the morrow. They washed themselves daily from their sins knowing they might preserve the purity and whiteness of their garments. Brothers and Sisters, do the samemake short reckonings.   
And it will be well for you every Sabbath evening, or at any other time, if so it pleases you, to make a reckoning of what you do on the Sabbath. I do not say this in order that you may be encouraged in any self-righteous congratulation that you have done well. If you make your reckoning correct, you will never have much cause to congratulate yourself, but always cause to mourn that you did your duty so ill compared with what you ought to have done. When the Sabbath is over and you have been twice to the house of God to teach your class, just sit down and try to remember what were the points in which you failed. Perhaps you exhibited a hasty temper. You spoke to a boy too sharply when he was a little rebellious. Perhaps you were too complacent. You saw sin committed and ought to have reproved it and you did not do so. If you find out your own failing, that is half the way to a cure. Next Sabbath you can try and set it right.   
Then there are times which Providence puts in your way which will be excellent seasons for reckoning. For instance, every time a boy or girl leaves the school, there is an opportunity afforded you of thinking to yourselves, Well, how did I deal with Betsy? How did I treat John? Did I give William such teaching as will help him in his future life to maintain integrity in the midst of temptation and preserve righteousness when he shall be subjected to imminent perils? How did I teach the girl? Did I so teach her that she will know her duty when she goes into the world? Did I strive with all my might to lead her to the foot of the Cross?   
There are many solemn questions which you may put concerning the child. And when you meet with any of them grown up in later years, you will find that a very proper season for giving an account of your stewardship to your conscience, by seeing whether you really did with that person, when a child, as you could have desired.   
Then, there is a peculiar time for casting up accounts when a child dies. Ah, what a host of thoughts cluster around the bed of a dying child whom we have taught. Next to the father and the mother, I should think the Sunday school teacher will take the most interest in the dying one. You will remember, There lies withering the flower which my hand has watered. There is an immortal soul about to pass the portals of eternity, whom I have taught. O God, have I taught this dying child the Truth, or have I deceived him! Have I dealt faithfully with him? Have I told him of his ruin? Have I set before him how he was fallen in Adam and depraved in himself? Have I told him about the great redemption of Christ? Have I shown him the necessity of regeneration and the work of the Holy Spirit? Or have I amused him with tales about the historical parts of the Bible and pieces of morality and kept back the weightier matters of the Law?

Can I put my hand into his dying hand and silently lifting my heart to Heaven, can I say, O God You know I am clear of his blood? Ah, that is a thing that stings the minister oftenwhen he recollects that any of his congregation are dying. When I stand sometimes by the deathbed of any of the ungodly in my congregation, it brings many a tearful thought to me. Have I been as earnest as I ought to have been? Did I cry to this man, Escape for your life, look not behind you, stay not in all the plain, flee to the mountains!?   
Did I pray for him, weep over him, tell him of his sin, preach Christ simply, plainly, boldly, to him? Was there not an occasion when I used lightness when I ought to have been solemn? Might there not have been a season when I uttered something by mistake which may have been a pillow for the armhole of his conscience on which he might rest? Have not I helped to smooth his path to Hell, instead of putting blocks in his way and chains across his path that he might be turned out of it and led to seek the Savior?   
Ah, while we know that salvation is all of grace let none of us imagine we are free from the blood of souls unless we warn them with diligence, unless we preach with faithfulness. For this same Bible which tells me that Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, tells me that if I warn them not, their blood, if they perish, shall be required at my hand.   
But now, Teacher, let me tell you an occasion when you must give your account. You may put off all these seasons if you like. You may live as carelessly as you please, but if you have a particle of heart in you, you will have to give an account when you are sick and cannot go to your class. If your conscience is worth havingwhich some peoples consciences are not, for they are dead and searedif your conscience is an awakened one, when you are put out of your work, you will begin to think how you did it.   
You should read the letters of that holy man Rutherford. If ever there was a man who preached the Gospel sweetly and with Divine unction, I should think it must have been he. And yet when he was shut up in Aberdeen and could not get out to his much-loved flock, he said, Ah, if the Lord will let me go out to preach again, I will never be such a dull drone as I was likely to be. I will preach with tears in my eyes, so that the people may be comforted and the sinners converted. Perhaps when you are lying ill in your bed-room, little Jane comes to see you and says, I hope you will soon get well, teacher. Or William, or Thomas calls and enquires about you every Sunday afternoon and asks the servant to give his love to you and hopes that teacher will soon come back again.   
Then is the time when I know you will be sure to cast up your account. You will say, Ah, when I get back to my class, I wont teach them as I used to do. I will study my lesson more, I will pray more. I wont be so hot or so fast with them as I was likely to be. I will bear with their ill manners. Ah, if my Master will give me, like Hezekiah, another fifteen years of labor and will give me more grace, I will strive to be better. You will be sure to cast up your accounts when you get sick.   
But if you do not do it then, I will tell you when you must. That is when you come to die. What a dreadful thing it must be to be an unfaithful preacher on a deathbed. (Oh that I may be saved from that)! To be upon ones bed when life is over. To have had great opportunities, mighty congregations and to have been so diligent about something else as to have neglected to preach the full and free Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! Methinks as I lie in my bed a-dying, I should see specters and grim things in the room. One would come and stare upon me and say, Ah, you are dying. Remember how many times I sat in the front of the gallery and listened to you, but you never once told me to escape from the wrath to come. You were talking to me about something I did not understand. But the simple matter of the Gospel you never preached to me and I died in doubt and trembling. And now you are coming to me to the Hell which I have inherited because you were unfaithful.   
And when in our gray and dying age we see the generations which have grown up around our pulpits, we shall think of them all. We shall think of the time when as striplings we first began to preach. We shall remember the youths that then crowded, then the men and then the gray heads that passed away. And methinks as they come on in grim procession, they will everyone leave a fresh curse upon our conscience because we were unfaithful. The deathbed of a man who has murdered his fellows, of some grim tyrant who has let the bloodhounds of war loose upon mankind must be an awful thing.   
When the soldier and the soldiers widow and the murdered man of peace rise up before him. When the smoke of devastated countries seems to blow into his eyes and make them sore and red. When the blood of men hangs on his conscience like a great red pall. When bloody murder, the grim chamberlain, draws red curtains round his bed and when he begins to approach the last end where the murderer must inherit his dreary doomit must be a fearful time indeed. But, methinks to have murdered souls must be more awful stillto have distributed poison to children instead of bread, to have given them stones when they asked us for right foodto have taught them error when we ought to have taught them the Truth as it is in Jesus, or to have spoken to them with cold listlessness when earnestness was needed. Oh, how your children seem to curse you, when you lie there and have been unfaithful to your charge! Yes, you will have to cast up your account then.   
But let me tell you, your hope must all be fixed on Jesus and that must be the consolation of your life and death. And it will be very sweet when you come to die, you that have been successful in winning souls to Christ. Ah, that will bring a little life into the cheek of the consumptive teacher who dying young, when you remind her that there was a little girl who, a year before she was taken ill, kissed her hand and said, Good bye, teacher, we shall meet in Heaven. Do not you remember, Teacher, telling me the story of Jesus on the Cross and taking me home one Sunday afternoon and putting your arms around my neck and kneeling down and praying that God would bless me? Oh my Teacher, that brought me to Jesus.   
Yes, Teacher, when you are lying on your bed, pale and consumptive, you will remember that there is one up there beside your Savior who will receive you into eternal habitationsthat young spirit who has gone before youwho by your means was emancipated from the wickedness and bondage of a sinful world. Happy is the teacher who has the hope of meeting a whole band of such in Heaven! Such a thought often cheers me. Let the world say what it will, I know when I die there are many a spirit that will think of me in after years as the man who preached the Gospel to him. Many a drunkard brought to Jesus and many a harlot reclaimed, by Gods grace.   
And to the teacher it must be the same to think that when he claps his wings and mounts from this lower valley of earth to Heaven, he will see a bright spirit coming down to meet him and he will hear the Spirit saying

*Sister spirit, come away.*

And when he opens his eyes, he will see that the song came from the lips of one to whom he had been blessed as the means of conversion. Happy you who shall be welcomed at the gates of Paradise by your spiritual sons and daughters and who shall have besides your Masters welcome, the welcome of those whom He has given you to be jewels in your crown of glory forever and ever.

Now to conclude. We must all give an account to God in the Day of Judgment. That is the thing which makes death so terrible. Oh, Death, if you were all, what are you but a pinch and all is over! But after Death the Judgment. This is the sting of the dragon to the ungodly. The last great day is come. The books are openedmen, women and children are assembled. Many have come and some on the right and some on the left, have already heard the sentence. It is now your turn. Teacher! What account will you render? In the first place, are you in Christ yourself? Or have you taught to others what you did not know yourself?

Have I any such here? Doubtless, I have, for alas, there are many such in our schools. Oh, my Friend, what will you say when the Master, opening the book, shall ask you, What had you to do, to declare my statutes? Will you look at Him and say, Lord I taught in Your schools and You have eaten and drunk in our streets. If you should say so, He will say, Verily, I never knew you, depart from me you cursed.

Then, what have you to say with regard to your schoolsfor although our state at last will really be settled according to our interest in Christ, you will be judged by your works, as evidences. The Scripture always says that we are to be judged according to our works. Well, then, the book is opened. Some of you hear your own name read and you hear that one brief sentenceInasmuch as you have been faithful over a few things I will make you a ruler over many thingsenter you into the joy of your Lord! Oh, Heaven of heavens! And is this the reward of the little trouble of teaching a few children? Oh, Master, You give ingots of gold for our grains of dustour fragments of service You reward with crowns and kingdoms!

But He turns to others and to some of you He says, Inasmuch as you did it not unto the least of these my Brethren, you did it not unto Me. Depart from Me into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels. Which of these two shall be said to me? Which of these two shall be said to you? Oh, as in Gods sight I charge you by Him who is the Judge of the quick and dead, by the swiftness of His chariot wheels which now are bringing Him here, by the solemnity of His awful tribunal, by that sentence which shall never be reversedjudge yourselves for then you shall not be judged.

Give an account of your stewardship to your conscience and to your God. Confess your sins, seek His help and begin from this hour, by His Holy Spirit, to undertake His work afresh. And may you stand before His face clothed in the righteousness of your Redeemer and washed in His blood. Though not boasting in your works may you be able to stand accepted in Him and your works shall follow when you rise from your labors and you shall be among the blessed that die in the Lord.

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Sermon #192 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER A STEWARD   
NO. 192

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 4, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.**   
AT BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL,   
ON BEHALF OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION

**Give an account of your stewardship. Luke 16:2.**

WE have heard many times in our lives that we are all stewards to Almighty God. We hold it as a solemn truth of our religion that the rich man is responsible for the use which he makes of his wealth. The talented man must give an account to God of the interest which he gets upon his talents. Everyone of us, in proportion to our time and opportunities, must give an account for himself before Almighty God. But, my dear Brothers and Sisters, our responsibility is even deeper and greater than that of other men. We have the ordinary responsibility which falls upon all professors of religion to give an account of all we have to God. But besides this, you and I have the extraordinary responsibilities of our official standingyou, as teachers for Christ in your classes. And others of us as preachers for Him before the great congregation.

The first responsibility is too heavy for any man to fulfill. Apart from Divine grace, it is not possible that any man should so use all that God has given him as to be accepted at last with a, Well done you good and faithful servant. Yet even if that were possible, it would still remain an utter impossibility for us fully to sustain the fearful weight of responsibility which rests upon us as teachers of the Word of God to our fellow immortals. Upon our necks there are two yokessovereign grace can make them light and easy, but apart from that they will gall our shoulders. For they are, of themselves, too heavy for us to bear.

Common responsibility is as Solomons whip. But extraordinary responsibility derived from official standing, when not regarded, will be as the scorpion of Rehoboamits little finger shall be thicker than its fathers loins. Woe unto the watchman who warns them not! Woe unto the minister who fails to teach the Truth! Woe unto the Sunday school teacher who is unfaithful to his trust! Now, let us try to stir one another up upon this seriously important matter. You will pray for me while I preach, that I may utter some things that may do good to all now present and I will labor that God may, in answer to your prayers, give me words and thoughts which shall be blessed to you.

Now first, let me show the meaning of our being stewards. Then let us consider what kind of account we shall have to give. And lastly, let us notice the days of reckoning when we OUGHT to cast up our account and the days of reckoning when we MUST give in our account.

I. First, then, THE STEWARDWHAT IS HE? In the first place, the steward is a servant. He is one of the greatest of servants. But he is only a servant. Perhaps he is the bailiff of a farm and looks, to all intents and purposes, like a country farmerhe rides over his masters estate and has many men under him. Still he is only a servanthe is under authority he is only a steward. Perhaps he is steward in the house of some gentleman who employs him to see after the whole of his establishment in order that he may be free from cares in that capacity. He is himself a master, but still he is a servant. For he has one over him.

Let him be as proud as he pleases, he has little to be proud offor the rank he holds in life is the rank of a servant. Now, the minister and the Sunday school teacher specially stand in the rank of servants. We are none of us our own masters. We are not independent gentlemen who may do as we please! Our classes are not our own farms which we may till in our own manner and neglect if we please. They are not such that we may produce any harvest, or none at all, at our own discretion. No, we are nothing better than stewards and we are to labor for our Master in Heaven. What a strange thing it is to see a minister or a teacher giving himself fine airs, as if he were somebody in the world and might do as he pleased. Is it not an anomaly?

How is he to talk about the sacrifices that he makes when he is spending only his masters property? How is he to boast about the time which he expends when his time is not his own? It is all his Masters. He is a servant and therefore, do what he may, he only discharges the duty for which he is well rewarded. He has no reason to be proud or to lord it over others, for whatever his power among them may be, he is himself neither more nor less than a servant. Let each of us try to remember that. I am only a servant.

If a superintendent puts a teacher in a class which she does not like, she will remember that she is a servant. She does not allow her servants at home to stand up and say they are not going to do the dishes but will only wait on tables. They are servants and must do as they are told. And if we felt that we were servants, we should not object to do what we are told for Christs sakethough we would not do it at the dictation of menyet for Christs sake we do it as unto the Lord.

We do not suppose that our servants will come to us at night and expect us to say to them, You have done your work very well today. We do not imagine that they will look for constant commendation. They are servants and when they get their wages that is their praise for their work. They may judge they are worth their money, or else we should not keep them. When you do your work for Jesus, remember you are only a servant. Do not expect always to have that encouragement which some people are constantly crying after.

If you get encouragement from your pastor or from other teachers or from your friends, be thankful. But if you do not, go on with your work notwithstanding. You are a servant and when you receive your reward, that is of grace and not of debt. Then you will have the highest praises that can be passed upon youthe plaudits of your Lord and eternity with Him whose you are and whom you desire to serve.

But still while the steward is a servant, he is an honorable one. It does not do for the other servants in the house to tell him that he is a servant. He will not endure thathe knows it and feels it. He desires to act and work as such, but at the same time he is an honored servant. Now, those who serve Christ in the office of teaching are honorable men and women. I remember to have heard a very unseemly discussion between two persons as to whether the minister was not superior to the Sunday school teacher. It reminded me of that talk of the disciples, as to who among them was the greatest.

Why, we are all of us the least, if we feel aright and though we must each of us exalt our office as God has given it to us, yet I see not anywhere in the Bible anything that should lead me to believe that the office of the preacher is more honorable than that of the teacher. It seems to me that every Sunday school teacher has a right to put Reverend before his name as much as I have, or if not, if he discharges his trust, he certainly is a Right Honorable. He teaches his congregation and preaches to his class. I may preach to more and he to less, but still he is doing the same work, though in a smaller sphere.

I am sure I can sympathize with Mr. Carey, when he said of his son Felix, who left the missionary work to become an ambassador, Felix has driveled into an ambassadormeaning to say, that he was once a great person as a missionary but that he had afterwards accepted a comparatively insignificant office. So I think we may say of the Sunday school teacher, if he gives up his work because he cannot attend to it on account of his enlarged businesshe drivels into a rich merchant. If he forsakes his teaching because he finds there is so much else to do, he drivels into something less than he was before.

There is one exceptionif he is obliged to give up to attend to his own family and makes that family his Sunday school class. There is no driveling there. He stands in the same position as he did before. I say they who teach, they who seek to pluck souls as brands from the burning are to be considered as honored personssecond only to Him from whom they received their commission. But still in some sweet sense lifted up to become fellows with Him, for He calls them His Brethren and His friends. The servant knows not what his Lord does, but I have called you Friends, for all things I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.

Only one more thought here. The steward is also a servant who has very great responsibility attached to his position. A sense of responsibility seems to a right man always a weighty thing. To do a thing where there is no responsibility involved at all is a very slight matter and hence we find in ordinary affairs that the labor which involves no trust is but poorly paid. But where there is a large amount of trust reposed the labor is paid in proportion. Now the work of the Sunday school teacher is one of the most responsible in the world. It has sometimes staggered me to think

how greatly God trusts you and me.

You remember the story of the prodigal. It finds a counterpart in each of us, who after long wandering in sin have come home to Jesus. I sometimes think that a prudent father, when the prodigal was restored to his house, could receive him to his heart, would press him to his bosom and give him a share of all his wealth. But he would be very slow to trust him in any matter of responsibility. The next market-day the old gentlemen would say, Now John, I love you with all my heart, but you know you ran away once and spent your living riotously. I must send your elder brother to market. I cannot trust you with my purseI love you. I have totally forgiven you but at the same time I cannot yet rely upon you.

Why does not God say so to us? Instead of that, when He takes poor prodigals to His heart, He trusts us with His most precious jewelsHe trusts us with immortal souls. He permits us to be the means of seeking His lost sheep and then allows us to feed the lambs after they are gathered. He puts the prodigal into the most important station and has confidence in him. Then, my Brothers and Sisters, seeing He has been gracious enough to repose confidence in such unworthy persons, shall we deceive Him? Oh nolet us earnestly labor as stewards that every part of the estate committed to us shall be found in good order when our Master comes. That every jot and tittle of our account shall be found correct when He sums it up in the great day of the audit before His Throne.

Our office is a very, very solemn one. Some think little of it. Some take it upon themselves very lightly. Giddy youths are enticed into the school and not rendered more sober by their connection with it. Let such depart from us. We want none but those who are sober, none but those who solemnly weigh what they are doing. We want those who enter upon the work as a matter involving life or deathnot as a trivial affair which concerns the interests of timebut an awfully solemn thing which even an angel would be incapable of performing, unless he had the abundant assistance of God the Holy Spirit. I have thus endeavored very simply to set forth the idea couched in the word stewardship. We are servants highly honored, very responsible and much trusted.

II. And now, THE ACCOUNTGive an account of your stewardship. Let us briefly think of this giving an account of our stewardship.   
Let us first notice that when we shall come to give an account of our stewardship before God, that account must be given personally, by each of us. While we are here, we talk in the mass. But when we come before God, we shall have to speak as individuals. You hear persons boasting about our Sunday school. Many persons are wicked enough to call the Sunday school their school, when they never see it in a years time. They say, I hope our school is flourishing, when they never subscribe a half-penny, when they never give the teachers a word of encouragement, or even a smile and do not know how many children the school contains.   
Yet they call it theirs. Thieves that they are, taking to themselves that which does not belong to them! But we, in our measure, make the same mistake. As a ministry, we often talk of the doings of the body, and what wonders have been done by the denomination. Now, let us remember, when we come before God, there will be no judging us in denominations, no dealing with us in schools and in churchesthe account must be given for each one by himself. So, then, you that have the infant class, you will have to give your own account. It was but the other day you were finding fault with the conduct of the senior class and you were told then to look at home. Conscience told you so.   
But at last, when you shall have to stand before God, you will have no account to give of the senior class, but of that infant class committed to you. And you, my Sister, you have been seven or eight years a teacher you must give an account for yourself, not for that other teacher of another class of whom you have often boasted, because she has been the means of bringing six or seven children to Christ lately.   
Remember, her six wont be put with your none at all, in order to make the total at the years end look respectable. But there will stand your great blank at the end of your labors and there will remain the dark mark for your negligence, for your unpunctuality, your carelessness in your class, without the relief of the bright side of the diligent teachers success. You must be judged each of you for yourself, not in parties, but one by one. This makes it terrible workfor a man to be looked at all alone.   
I have known people who could not bear to stand up in a pulpit. The very fact of so many eyes looking upon them seemed so horrible But how will it be when we must stand up and hear our hearts read by the allsearching eye of God? When the whole of our career in the offices which we now hold will be published before the sun and thatI repeat it without the salvo of the success of others, without any addition to our labors derived from the diligence of other teachers?   
Come, Mr. Steward, what is your account? Not that one, Sir, not that oneyour account. Lord, I have brought in the account of the Sunday school books. No, not that, the account of your own class? Well, my Master, I have brought in the account of the class for the last twenty-five years, showing how many were converted. No, not that. The account of your own class while you were its teacher. Well, I have brought in the account of the class during the time I was teacher with So-and-So. No, not that. The account of the class while you were the teacher of it alone the account of how you taught what you taught, how you prayed, how earnestly you labored, how diligently you studied, and what you sought to do for Christ.   
Not the accomplishments of the other teacher who helped you in another part of the duty, but your own personal account alone must be brought in before God. Give an account of your stewardship. Putting it in this light, what account will some of you give at the last and great day? Just let me stop a minute to charge your memories. What kind of account will it be? I trust a very large number here can humbly in their hearts say, I have done but little, but I did that sincerely and prayerfully. May God accept it through Jesus Christ!   
But I fear there are some others, who, if they are true to their consciences, will say, I have done but little. I did that little carelessly. I did it without prayer. I did it without the help of the Holy Spirit. Then, my Brother and Sister, I hope you will add after that, Oh, my God, forgive me and help me from this good hour to be diligent in this Divine business, fervent in my spirit, serving the Lord. And may God bless you in that prayer! Make no resolution, but offer a prayer which is far better. And may you be heard in Heaven, the dwelling place of God.   
And note again, that while this account must be personal it must be exact. You will not, when you present your account before God, present the gross total, but every separate item. When you give your account of your stewardship, it will be thus. You had so many children. What did you say to this child and to this and to this and to the other? How often did you pray for that child with his bitter temper? For that child with his unbending obstinacy? For that child with its quickness and its sweet affection? For that child, that sulky one? For that child, the headstrong, vicious one that had learned all the evils of the street and seemed to taint others?   
What did you do for each one of these? How did you labor for the conversion of each one? And to make the account still more particular it will run thusWhat did you do for each child on each Sabbath? You heard one child utter an ill worddid you reprove it? You saw another child oppress a little onedid you deliver the less out of his hand and reprove him and teach both children to love each other? Did you notice the follies of each and strive to understand the temperament of each so that you should fit your discourse or your prayer to each? Did you travail as in birth for the conversion of each one?   
Did you agonize in prayer with God and then did you agonize in exhortation with them, beseeching them to be reconciled to Christ? I believe the account will be far more minute than this, when God shall come to try our hearts and reins as well as our works and ways. My poor way of putting it does but becloud the truth which I seek to bring forth, but nevertheless so shall it bea special and exact account shall be given. And then there shall be an account given for every opportunitynot only for every child, but for every opportunity of doing good to the child.   
Did you avail yourself of that afternoon when the child was in a peculiarly solemn frame because his little brother lay at home dead? Did you seek to send the arrows home when Providence had made a wound in his little heart because he had lost his dear mother? Did you seek to turn every event which occurred in the school to account, whether it was joyous or the reverse? God gave you the opportunity and He will at last ask you what you did with it. We shall many of us make but a sorry account, for we have neglected much that we ought to have done. And the general confession must be ours as teachers, We have done those things which we ought not to have done and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done.   
And then remember, the account will be exact as to everything that we did. We shall not only be examined as to how we addressed the school. We may have had peculiar gifts for that and we may have done well. It will be, How did you address your own class? and not that alone, but, How did you study the lessons? If you had no time it will not be required of you to do what you could not do, but if you had much leisure how did you spend it? Was it for your children, for your Masters good, that you might find polished shafts to shoot forth from your bowthat God might bless you by giving you strength to send them home into the heart?   
And then, what did you do in your closet? Were you cold and careless there? Were your children forgotten, or did you bring them on your heart and in your arms and with tears and cries commend them to Christ? Ah, Sunday school teachers, your closet shall be turned into the open air one day and the contents of your secret chambers be published before the sun. Oh, you whose cob-webbed closets witness against you! Oh, you against whom the beam out of the wall exclaims because your voice has not been heard there, against whom the very floor might bear witness, because it has never felt the weight of your kneeshow will you stand this searching test? How will you endure this day of burning, when God shall try you for everything you did and everything you did not do which you ought to have done, in connection with the work of teaching your children? The account must be exact and precise, as well as personal. I shall not stop to enlarge upon that. Your own conscience and judgment can enlarge upon it at home.

Now, remember, once again, that the account must be complete. You will not be allowed to leave out something, you will not be allowed to add anything. Perhaps some of you would like to begin with tomorrow, or next Sabbath and strike out the past. No, Sunday school teacher, when God says, Give an account of your stewardship, you will have to begin with the day when you first were a teacher. Ah, my God, how many there are who profess to preach the Word, who might well beg that you would let many a year of their ministry be buried in forgetfulness! Ah, might not some of us fall upon our knees and say, Lord, let me give account of my diligent years, not of my idle years!   
But we must begin with our ordination. We must end with our death and you must begin with the first hour when you sat down in your class. And you must end when life ends and not till then. Does not this put a very solemn aspect upon your account, some of you? You are always saying, I will be better tomorrow. Will that blot out yesterday? I must be more diligent in future. Will that redeem the lost opportunities which have departed in the years gone by? Noif you have loitered long and lingered much, you will find the hardest running of today will not make up for the loitering of yesterday.   
There have been some men who, after spending many years in sin, have been doubly diligent for Christ afterwards, but they have always felt that they have only done the days work in the day and they mourned over those years which the locusts had eaten, as gone beyond recall. Oh, catch the moments as they fly, Sunday school teachers! Use the days as they come. Do not be talking about making up for the badness of the first part of the account by the brilliant character of the conclusion.   
You cannot do it. You must give an account for each day separately, for each year by itself. And do what you may to retrieve your losses, the losses still stand upon the book and the Master will say, at last, How came these here? And, though they are all covered up in Sovereign Grace, if you believe in Christ Jesus, yet you would not wish to have any the more stains for that. Because Christ has washed you, you do not desire to make yourself filthy. Because He has atoned you do not desire to commit sin. No, live, my Brothers and Sisters, as Sunday school teachers should live. Live as if your own salvation depended upon the strictness of your fulfilling your duty. And yet remember your salvation does not depend upon that, but on your personal interest in the Everlasting Covenant and in the all-prevailing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Israels Strength and Redeemer.   
III. And now, though there are many other things I might say, I fear lest I might weary you. Therefore, let me notice some occasions when it will be WELL for you all to give an account of your stewardship. And then notice when you MUST give an account of it.   
You know there is a proverb, that short reckonings make long friends, and a very true proverb it is. A man will always be at friendship with his conscience as long as he makes short reckonings with it. It was a good rule of the old Puritans, that of making frank and full confession of sin every night. They did not leave a weeks sin to be confessed on Saturday night, or Sabbath morning. They recalled the failures, imperfections and mistakes of each day in order that they might learn from one day of failure how to achieve the victory on the morrow. They washed themselves daily from their sins knowing they might preserve the purity and whiteness of their garments. Brothers and Sisters, do the samemake short reckonings.   
And it will be well for you every Sabbath evening, or at any other time, if so it pleases you, to make a reckoning of what you do on the Sabbath. I do not say this in order that you may be encouraged in any self-righteous congratulation that you have done well. If you make your reckoning correct, you will never have much cause to congratulate yourself, but always cause to mourn that you did your duty so ill compared with what you ought to have done. When the Sabbath is over and you have been twice to the house of God to teach your class, just sit down and try to remember what were the points in which you failed. Perhaps you exhibited a hasty temper. You spoke to a boy too sharply when he was a little rebellious. Perhaps you were too complacent. You saw sin committed and ought to have reproved it and you did not do so. If you find out your own failing, that is half the way to a cure. Next Sabbath you can try and set it right.   
Then there are times which Providence puts in your way which will be excellent seasons for reckoning. For instance, every time a boy or girl leaves the school, there is an opportunity afforded you of thinking to yourselves, Well, how did I deal with Betsy? How did I treat John? Did I give William such teaching as will help him in his future life to maintain integrity in the midst of temptation and preserve righteousness when he shall be subjected to imminent perils? How did I teach the girl? Did I so teach her that she will know her duty when she goes into the world? Did I strive with all my might to lead her to the foot of the Cross?   
There are many solemn questions which you may put concerning the child. And when you meet with any of them grown up in later years, you will find that a very proper season for giving an account of your stewardship to your conscience, by seeing whether you really did with that person, when a child, as you could have desired.   
Then, there is a peculiar time for casting up accounts when a child dies. Ah, what a host of thoughts cluster around the bed of a dying child whom we have taught. Next to the father and the mother, I should think the Sunday school teacher will take the most interest in the dying one. You will remember, There lies withering the flower which my hand has watered. There is an immortal soul about to pass the portals of eternity, whom I have taught. O God, have I taught this dying child the Truth, or have I deceived him! Have I dealt faithfully with him? Have I told him of his ruin? Have I set before him how he was fallen in Adam and depraved in himself? Have I told him about the great redemption of Christ? Have I shown him the necessity of regeneration and the work of the Holy Spirit? Or have I amused him with tales about the historical parts of the Bible and pieces of morality and kept back the weightier matters of the Law?   
Can I put my hand into his dying hand and silently lifting my heart to Heaven, can I say, O God You know I am clear of his blood? Ah, that is a thing that stings the minister oftenwhen he recollects that any of his congregation are dying. When I stand sometimes by the deathbed of any of the ungodly in my congregation, it brings many a tearful thought to me. Have I been as earnest as I ought to have been? Did I cry to this man, Escape for your life, look not behind you, stay not in all the plain, flee to the mountains!?   
Did I pray for him, weep over him, tell him of his sin, preach Christ simply, plainly, boldly, to him? Was there not an occasion when I used lightness when I ought to have been solemn? Might there not have been a season when I uttered something by mistake which may have been a pillow for the armhole of his conscience on which he might rest? Have not I helped to smooth his path to Hell, instead of putting blocks in his way and chains across his path that he might be turned out of it and led to seek the Savior?   
Ah, while we know that salvation is all of grace let none of us imagine we are free from the blood of souls unless we warn them with diligence, unless we preach with faithfulness. For this same Bible which tells me that Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, tells me that if I warn them not, their blood, if they perish, shall be required at my hand.   
But now, Teacher, let me tell you an occasion when you must give your account. You may put off all these seasons if you like. You may live as carelessly as you please, but if you have a particle of heart in you, you will have to give an account when you are sick and cannot go to your class. If your conscience is worth havingwhich some peoples consciences are not, for they are dead and searedif your conscience is an awakened one, when you are put out of your work, you will begin to think how you did it.   
You should read the letters of that holy man Rutherford. If ever there was a man who preached the Gospel sweetly and with Divine unction, I should think it must have been he. And yet when he was shut up in Aberdeen and could not get out to his much-loved flock, he said, Ah, if the Lord will let me go out to preach again, I will never be such a dull drone as I was likely to be. I will preach with tears in my eyes, so that the people may be comforted and the sinners converted. Perhaps when you are lying ill in your bed-room, little Jane comes to see you and says, I hope you will soon get well, teacher. Or William, or Thomas calls and enquires about you every Sunday afternoon and asks the servant to give his love to you and hopes that teacher will soon come back again.   
Then is the time when I know you will be sure to cast up your account. You will say, Ah, when I get back to my class, I wont teach them as I used to do. I will study my lesson more, I will pray more. I wont be so hot or so fast with them as I was likely to be. I will bear with their ill manners. Ah, if my Master will give me, like Hezekiah, another fifteen years of labor and will give me more grace, I will strive to be better. You will be sure to cast up your accounts when you get sick.  
But if you do not do it then, I will tell you when you must. That is when you come to die. What a dreadful thing it must be to be an unfaithful preacher on a deathbed. (Oh that I may be saved from that)! To be upon ones bed when life is over. To have had great opportunities, mighty congregations and to have been so diligent about something else as to have neglected to preach the full and free Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! Methinks as I lie in my bed a-dying, I should see specters and grim things in the room. One would come and stare upon me and say, Ah, you are dying. Remember how many times I sat in the front of the gallery and listened to you, but you never once told me to escape from the wrath to come. You were talking to me about something I did not understand. But the simple matter of the Gospel you never preached to me and I died in doubt and trembling. And now you are coming to me to the Hell which I have inherited because you were unfaithful.

And when in our gray and dying age we see the generations which have grown up around our pulpits, we shall think of them all. We shall think of the time when as striplings we first began to preach. We shall remember the youths that then crowded, then the men and then the gray heads that passed away. And methinks as they come on in grim procession, they will everyone leave a fresh curse upon our conscience because we were unfaithful. The deathbed of a man who has murdered his fellows, of some grim tyrant who has let the bloodhounds of war loose upon mankind must be an awful thing.   
When the soldier and the soldiers widow and the murdered man of peace rise up before him. When the smoke of devastated countries seems to blow into his eyes and make them sore and red. When the blood of men hangs on his conscience like a great red pall. When bloody murder, the grim chamberlain, draws red curtains round his bed and when he begins to approach the last end where the murderer must inherit his dreary doomit must be a fearful time indeed. But, methinks to have murdered souls must be more awful stillto have distributed poison to children instead of bread, to have given them stones when they asked us for right foodto have taught them error when we ought to have taught them the Truth as it is in Jesus, or to have spoken to them with cold listlessness when earnestness was needed. Oh, how your children seem to curse you, when you lie there and have been unfaithful to your charge! Yes, you will have to cast up your account then.   
But let me tell you, your hope must all be fixed on Jesus and that must be the consolation of your life and death. And it will be very sweet when you come to die, you that have been successful in winning souls to Christ. Ah, that will bring a little life into the cheek of the consumptive teacher who dying young, when you remind her that there was a little girl who, a year before she was taken ill, kissed her hand and said, Good bye, teacher, we shall meet in Heaven. Do not you remember, Teacher, telling me the story of Jesus on the Cross and taking me home one Sunday afternoon and putting your arms around my neck and kneeling down and praying that God would bless me? Oh my Teacher, that brought me to Jesus.   
Yes, Teacher, when you are lying on your bed, pale and consumptive, you will remember that there is one up there beside your Savior who will receive you into eternal habitationsthat young spirit who has gone before youwho by your means was emancipated from the wickedness and bondage of a sinful world. Happy is the teacher who has the hope of meeting a whole band of such in Heaven! Such a thought often cheers me. Let the world say what it will, I know when I die there are many a spirit that will think of me in after years as the man who preached the Gospel to him. Many a drunkard brought to Jesus and many a harlot reclaimed, by Gods grace.   
And to the teacher it must be the same to think that when he claps his wings and mounts from this lower valley of earth to Heaven, he will see a bright spirit coming down to meet him and he will hear the Spirit saying *Sister spirit, come away.*   
And when he opens his eyes, he will see that the song came from the lips of one to whom he had been blessed as the means of conversion. Happy you who shall be welcomed at the gates of Paradise by your spiritual sons and daughters and who shall have besides your Masters welcome, the welcome of those whom He has given you to be jewels in your crown of glory forever and ever.   
Now to conclude. We must all give an account to God in the Day of Judgment. That is the thing which makes death so terrible. Oh, Death, if you were all, what are you but a pinch and all is over! But after Death the Judgment. This is the sting of the dragon to the ungodly. The last great day is come. The books are openedmen, women and children are assembled. Many have come and some on the right and some on the left, have already heard the sentence. It is now your turn. Teacher! What account will you render? In the first place, are you in Christ yourself? Or have you taught to others what you did not know yourself?   
Have I any such here? Doubtless, I have, for alas, there are many such in our schools. Oh, my Friend, what will you say when the Master, opening the book, shall ask you, What had you to do, to declare my statutes? Will you look at Him and say, Lord I taught in Your schools and You have eaten and drunk in our streets. If you should say so, He will say, Verily, I never knew you, depart from me you cursed.   
Then, what have you to say with regard to your schoolsfor although our state at last will really be settled according to our interest in Christ, you will be judged by your works, as evidences. The Scripture always says that we are to be judged according to our works. Well, then, the book is opened. Some of you hear your own name read and you hear that one brief sentenceInasmuch as you have been faithful over a few things I will make you a ruler over many thingsenter you into the joy of your Lord! Oh, Heaven of heavens! And is this the reward of the little trouble of teaching a few children? Oh, Master, You give ingots of gold for our grains of dustour fragments of service You reward with crowns and kingdoms!   
But He turns to others and to some of you He says, Inasmuch as you did it not unto the least of these my Brethren, you did it not unto Me. Depart from Me into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels. Which of these two shall be said to me? Which of these two shall be said to you? Oh, as in Gods sight I charge you by Him who is the Judge of the quick and dead, by the swiftness of His chariot wheels which now are bringing Him here, by the solemnity of His awful tribunal, by that sentence which shall never be reversedjudge yourselvesfor then you shall not be judged.   
Give an account of your stewardship to your conscience and to your God. Confess your sins, seek His help and begin from this hour, by His Holy Spirit, to undertake His work afresh. And may you stand before His face clothed in the righteousness of your Redeemer and washed in His blood. Though not boasting in your works may you be able to stand accepted in Him and your works shall follow when you rise from your labors and you shall be among the blessed that die in the Lord.

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THE LAST SERMON FOR THE YEAR   
NO. 2445

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, DECEMBER 29, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 26, 1869.

**Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward. Luke 16:2.**

THE first part of this text applies to us all. The second part will apply to each one of us before long. Give an account of your stewardship, is a command that may be addressed to the ungodly. They are accountable to God for all that they have, or have ever had, or ever shall have. The Law of the Lord is not relaxed because they have sinnedthey still remain responsible to God even though they attempt to cast off the yoke of the Almighty. As creatures formed by the Divine hand and sustained by Divine power, they are bound to serve God. And if they do not, and will not, His claims upon them do not ceaseand to each of them He says, Give an account of your stewardship.

This text may also be applied to the children of God, to the godlyin a different sense, however, and after another fashion. For, first of all, the godly are Gods childrenthey are accounted as standing in Christ. They are no longer merely Gods subjects, for what they owed to God as sinners has all been discharged by Jesus Christ, their Substitute and Savior. They have, therefore, been placed on a different footing from other men. But having been saved by Grace and adopted into Gods family, they have had entrusted to them talents which they are to use to His honor and Glory. Being the Lords children and being saved, they become His servantsand as His servants they are under responsibility to God and they will all have to give to Him an account of their stewardship.

Look at Eli. I have no doubt that he was a saved man, but God made him a steward over his own family as well as a Prophet to Israel, and he had to give an account of his stewardship. And because he had not been faithful in it, although he was not eternally condemned, yet he was made to suffer most miserably when he was told that the whole of his house would be swept awayand also when he heard of the deaths of his sons and, as the direst news of all, learned that the Ark of God was taken by the Philistines. God visited him in his capacity of steward, made him give his account, and awarded him in this life a heavy penalty for his unfaithfulness! And I do not doubt that many a child of God who has been saved at the last, yet, being found unfaithful as a steward, has had to suffer much, has lost much of honor and much of fellowship with Godand much of high advancement in the way of Grace which he might otherwise have obtained.

David was another such steward. He was not a lost soulI have no doubt that he is among the saved and blessed saints in Heavenbut as a steward he was not found faithful. You remember how grievously he sinned and from that moment his family was full of rebellion, his kingdom was full of trouble and he went with broken bones all the way down to his grave! Hence I may say to you, children of God, who are not under the Lawand I do not address you at all in a legal strain when I so speak to youyou also have a stewardship. Give an account of it, or else, perhaps, you may no longer be spared. Or, being spared, yet you may still have tokens of your Lords displeasure which you may carry with you even to your tomb. Thank God you shall leave them there! But it would be more for Gods Glory and for your own comfort to not have them at all.

I desire, on this last Sabbath evening of another year, not so much to speak to you, as to get you to talk to yourselves. So, first, we will think together upon the

reasonable demand made in our textGive an account of your stewardship. Next, we will examine some reasons why we should at once give an account of our stewardship. And, lastly, we will consider the weighty reason in the text which will come with force to each of us sooner or laterYou may no longer be steward.

I. First, then, let us consider this REASONABLE DEMAND and let each one of us try to comply with itGive an account of your stewardship. You man of God, you Christless soul, you aged man, you young Sister, Give an account of your stewardship.

First, give an account of the stewardship of your time. How have you spent it? Have not many hours been allowed to run to waste, or worse than waste, in frivolity and sin? Have you lived as a dying man should live? Have you employed your hours as remembering that they are very few and more precious than the diamonds in an emperors crown? What about your time? Has there not been much of it spent in indolence, in frothy talk, or that did not minister to edification? You need not accuse yourself for time spent in lawful recreation that may sustain your body and better fit it for the Lords service. It is well that you should have such recreation, but how much time is utterly wasted by some people, neither used for the good of this world, nor of that which is to come, but wholly frittered away in the service of sin, self and Satan? Where, for instance, did some of you spend yesterdayhow did you employ its precious hours? I will but bring that one day to your remembrancewas it a wellspent day? Is that hour well spent that is passed in the company of drunks? Do you call that day well spent that is given up to rioting, or that night that is defiled with wantonness? I charge you to answer this question! For every moment that God has lent to you, He will ask for an account of what you did with it. There is not an hour since you began to understand right from wrong for which you will not have to give an account to God! If there were nothing but time entrusted to our stewardship, here is room, indeed, for heart-searching and close reckoning!

Give an account of your stewardship, next, as to your talents. We all vary in our natural gifts and in our acquirements. One has the tongue of eloquence, another has the pen of a ready writer and a third has the artistic eye that discerns beauty. But, whichever of these gifts we may have, they belong to God and ought to be used in His service. Some have only such gifts as qualify them to earn their daily bread by manual laborthey have but little mental poweryet, for that little they must give an account and also for the physical strength with which God has blessed them. There is no person here without a talent of some sort or other. There is no one individual here without some form of power either given by nature or acquired by education. We are all endowed, in some degree or other, and we must, each one, give an account for that talent. What an account must some give who have been endowed with 10 talents, but have wasted them all!

What must be the account rendered by a Napoleon? What must be the reckoning given in by a Voltaire, with all the splendor of his intellect laid at the feet of Satan and desecrated to the damnation of mankind? Yet, while you think of these great ones of the earth, do not forget yourselves! What has been your special gift? You can speak well enough in some companieshave you ever spoken for Christ? You can write well, you judge that you have no mean gift in that directionhas your pen ever written a line that will bring your fellow men to the service of the Savior? What? Having 10 talents, are they all wrapped up in napkins, or all used for self, and none employed for God, for holiness, for the Truth of God, for righteousness? How sternly does the command come to you, Give an account of your stewardship. Yet I am afraid that we cannot, any of us, give an account of our talents without fear and trembling!

Next, give an account of your substance. We vary greatly as to our temporal circumstances, I suppose there are a few present to whom God has entrusted great wealth, more to whom He has given considerable substance and that to the most of us He has given somewhat more than is absolutely necessary for our actual needs. But whether it is much or little, we must give an account for it all! I do not know what some rich professors will have to say concerning that which they give to the cause of God. It is no tithe of their substanceit is, as it were, but the cheese parings and the candle endsand these they only give for the sake of appearance because it would not look respectable if they were altogether to withhold them! The Churchs coffers would never be as empty as they are if it were not that some of the stewards in the Church are not faithful to their trust.

It is very sad to think of some of the great men in our own country who have incomes which, in a single month, would furnish a competent support for an entire family during their whole lives! I wonder what sort of reckoning theirs will be when they have to give an account of hundreds of thousands or even millions of pounds? With some of them, all that they can say will be, So much lost on the racetrack, so much spent upon a paramour, so much paid for diamonds, so much squandered in this form of waste and so much in that. But for the poor and needy, who are perishing in our streets, the multitudes who crave even necessary breadsome of them have done nothing at all! There are grand exceptions, names that shall live as long as philanthropy is prized among mankind, but the exceptions are so terribly few that when the rich men of England are indicted at the bar of God, as they certainly will be, the account of their stewardship will be a truly terrible one! Yet what are you, and what am I, to judge thus, if we cannot say that we have been faithful with our little? I ask you if you have and I pray you to make a reckoning in your mind, now, of your stewardship of the gold, or the silver, or the copper with which God has entrusted you.

We must give an account, in the next place, of our influence. Everybody has some kind of influence. The mother who never leaves the nursery has a wondrous influence over those little children of hers, though no neighbor feels the force of her influence and no one but her own little ones are affected by her faithfulness. And who knows but that she is pressing to her bosom, perhaps a Whitefield who will thunder out the Gospel through the length and breadth of the land or perhaps, on the other hand, an infidel, whose dreadful blasphemies shall ruin multitudes? There is an influence that the mother has for which she must give an account to God! And the fathers influenceoh, Fathers, you cannot shake off your obligations to your children by sending them to school, whether to a Sunday school or a boarding school! They are your children and you must give an account of your stewardship concerning your own offspring!

Yes, and even the nurse girl, though she seems of small note in the commonwealth, yet she, also, has an influence over her little charge which she must use for Christ. Not only he who thrills a senate with his oratory, but he who speaks a word from the carpenters bencheach has his influence and each must use itand give an account of it. Not merely the man who, by refusing to lend his millions, could prevent the horrors of war, but the man who with a smile might help to laugh at sin, or with a word of rebuke might show that he abhorred it. There is no one of you without influence and I ask you, now, how you have used it? Has it always been on the side of the Lord? Give an account of your stewardship, for that influence will not always last.

We might pass on to consider all the other things that God has entrusted to us, but time would fail us. So I will remind you, my dear Friends, with much affection, that the account which you will have to render and which I ask you to render now, is not an account concerning other people. Oh, how nice it would be if we had to do that! Would it not? With what gusto some would undertake the task if they had to give a report upon other peoples characters! How easily each of us can play the detective upon our fellows! How ready we are to say of this man, Oh, yes, he gives away a good deal of money, but it is only out of ostentation. Or of that woman, Yes, she appears to be a Christian, but you do not know her private life. Or of that minister of the Gospel, Yes, he is very zealous, but be makes a good thing out of his ministry. We like thus to reckon up our fellow creatures and our arithmetic is wonderfully accurate, at least, so we think!

But when other people cast us up according to the same rule, the arithmetic seems terribly out of order and we cannot believe it to be right! Ah, but at the Great Judgment we shall not be asked to give an account for others, neither will I ask any of you, now, to be thinking about the conduct of others. What if others are worse than you are, does that make you the better, or the less guilty? What if others are not all they seem to be, perhaps neither are you! At any rate, their hypocrisy shall not make your pretense to be true! Judge yourselves, that you be not judged! Let each man thrust the lancet into his own wound and see to the affairs of his own soulfor each one must give account of himself to God.

Remember, too, that you are not called upon to give an account to others. Alas, there are many people who seem to live only that they may win the esteem of their fellows! There is somebody to whom we look up toif we do but have that somebodys smile, we think all is well. Perhaps some here are broken-hearted because that smile has vanished and they have been misjudged and unjustly condemned. It is a small matter to be judged of mans judgementand who is he that judges another mans servant? To his own master, the servant shall stand or fall, and not to this interloping judge! My dear Friends, when the opinion of one leans this way, and of another the other waywhen we see public opinion to be as restless and changing as the vane upon the Church steeple swinging round with every wind that blowswe may well bid defiance to it all and thank God that the last bar is not swayed by the follies of the times, and that the Great Judge will not give His verdict according to the whimsies of an hour, but according to the rule of absolute equity!

Yet remember that if it is hard to be judged of man, it will be still sterner to be judged of God! If, weighed even in the balances of men, some of us are found wanting, how shall we bear to be put into the unerring scales adjusted by the Divine hand, to be judged by Him who cannot errand to have our destiny fixed for all eternityeither in Heaven or in Hell? Remember this, my dear Hearer, and be ready to give an account of your stewardshipnot to your fellow creaturebut to the great Creator and Judge of all!

Remember also, dear Friends, that the account to be rendered will be from every man, from every man, personally, concerning himself. And whatever another mans account may be, it will not affect him. Some men will not have been any better than others of you have been. Yet if you perish as they perish, a numerous company will not make Hell any the cooler! If some men shall have been worse than others of you have been, it certainly will not diminish your punishment if you know that their doom is heavier than your own! Forget, for a while, that there are any other men in the world, and stand individually and separately before those awful eyes which are searching you through and throughfor God will judge each of you as if there were no other men to judgeand read your inmost heart as if He had not another object to look upon! Give an account, then, of your stewardship. God grant us Grace to give, on each of these separate items that I have mentioned, an honest statement not only to our own conscience, but to Him who is the Judge of all!

II. Now, for a few minutes, let us examine SOME REASONS WHY WE SHOULD AT ONCE GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF OUR STEWARDSHIP.   
It was a maxim of Pythagoras that each of his disciples should, every eventide, give a record of the actions of the day. I think it is well to do so, for we cannot too often take a retrospect of the past. But since, perhaps, some of you may have been lax in this duty, let me remind you that we have come, as it were, to the eventide of the year and it seems to be most suitable that before we cross into another year of Grace, we should, in our heart and conscience, take stock and give an account of our stewardship.   
Sit down a while, Pilgrim! Sit down a while. Here is the milestone marked with the end of another yearsit down upon it, put your hand to you brow and think! And lay your hand upon your heart and search and see what is there. This last Sabbath evening in the year is a most fitting time for giving this account and I ask you to use it in making up the account which you have to present before God. And if you feel unwilling to do it, I shall the more earnestly press you to do it! There are no persons who so dislike to look into their account books as those who are insolvent. Those who keep no books, when they come before the court, are understood to be rogues of the first waterand men who keep no mental memoranda of the past and bring up no recollections with regard to their sins, having tried to forget them allmay depend upon it that they are deceiving themselves! If you dare not search your hearts, I am afraid there is a reason for that fear and that, above all others, you ought to be diligent in this search.   
Permit me to remind you that if all should be wrong with you, it is best for you to know it. It is only the most reckless seaman who would rather not know whether there is a rock in the course that he is sailing. O Sirs, are you like the ostrich that, having covered its head in the sand, and shut its eyes to the hunter, thinks it is all secure? I pray you, seek to know the worst of your case! It seems to me that any honest and sane man would want to do this. There is nothing a wise man hates more, when he is sick, than to have a doctor attending him who will always, if he can, give a flattering report, but will never speak the truth about his patient. Let not your heart flatter you any longer, but say to it, My Soul, make out an honest account! See what and where you are and whether you are Gods servant or not, doing as God would have you do.   
Believer in Christ, it will be well for you to make out this account because you will find that it will help you to prize your Savior more. I never look into my own heart without first feeling shame and, afterwards, feeling greater love to Him who has eternally loved such a sinner as I am! I am sure it will drive you to your knees if you honestly search your own lives. There is enough in the history of a single week to make you prize your Redeemer more than ever if you fully realize the guilt of that one week and the greatness of His Grace in pardoning it! O Christian, if you would be driven nearer to your Lord, search and see, confess, repent and seek forgiveness. Go again to the Cross because you have again felt the burden of the sin that nailed your Savior there!   
And, ungodly man, I press you, also, to give an account of your stewardship because, perhaps, the same result may come to you. If you find that you cannot give so good an account as you thought you could when you were wrapped up in self-righteousness, perhaps you may be alarmed and dismayed when you see the true state of the caseand it may be that God the Holy Spirit will lead you to say, I will go to Jesus, for I am undone without Him. I will hasten to His Cross, for I need the pardon that His blood has bought. I will now go with the language of confession on my lips and beseech Him to accept me before another year begins. It seems such a long time since I have talked to some of you. Tossing to and fro upon my bed, suffering great pain, I have thought that those of you to whom I have preached, now, these many years, will have to give an account of every address that I have delivered to you and of every exhortation with which I have plied you. I beseech you, seek to make that account at once to your God in private and ask Him to humble you, and to draw you sweetly to trust His dear Son, that you may be saved!   
I cannot bear the thought that any of you should be lost! I had hoped that those who have supplied my place during my illness might, perhaps, have been guided to shoot the arrow more directly than I can shoot it. One thing I know, there was not among them all, whoever they might be, one who more anxiously desired that you might find the Savior than I do! And I pray at this moment, since I shall never preach to you again on another Sabbath of this year, that this night may be the last one you will spend in sinand that tomorrow may be a spiritual birthday to you, the first day in which you shall rejoice in a Savior! No, that this very night you may be born again and become a new creature in Christ Jesus!   
III. And now, lastly, let us consider THE REASON WHICH THE MASTER GIVESGive an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward.   
This may happen in various ways. It may be that some here may live for years and yet no longer be stewards. A preacher may be laid aside, his voice gone, his mental faculties weakenedhe is no longer steward. One is thankful to have further opportunities of serving the Lord and trying to bring sinners to the Savior. O my dear Brother, work for God while you can! It is one of the bitterest regrets a man can know, to lie on his bed, to be unable to speak and to think to himself, I wish I could preach that sermon over again. I did not drive that nail home with all the force I ought to have used! I have not been earnest enough in pleading with sinners! I have not wrestled, even to agony, over the salvation of their souls. It may be possible, my dear Brother Minister, that you and I may have 20 or 30 years of being laid aside from active service. Then let us work while we can, before the night comes when no man can work! Brother, let us seize the oar of the lifeboat and row out over the stormy sea, seeking to snatch the drowning ones from yonder wreck, for the time may come when our strong right arm shall be palsied and when we can do no more!   
Yes, and rich professors may have to give an account of their stewardship and no longer be stewards. There were some of that kind when the recent financial panic camethough they had much before the crash, they had nothing left afterwards so they could no longer be stewards of the wealth that had been taken from them! It must be a cause of deep regret to men in that position if they cannot give a good account of their stewardship because they have done but little good with their wealth while they had it. And think, Sirs, you to whom God has given great possessions, how soon He may take them from you, for riches abide not forever. Behold, they take to themselves wings and fly away! I know of no better way of clipping their wings than by giving generously to the cause of God and using in His service all that you can. It would be a subject for continual regret to you, I am sure, if you came down to poverty, not so much that you had descended in the social scale, for that you could bear if it came by mere misfortune through the Providence of Godbut if you felt, I did not do what I should have done when I had wealththat would be the arrow which would pierce you to the heart! It may be so, dear Brothers and Sisters, it may be so with some of you. At any rate, I feel that there are some of you who are poor because God will not lend His money where He knows that it will be locked up and not put out to good interest in His cause. What little you have is all hidden away, so the Lord will not trust you with more! He sees you are not fit to be one of His stewards. There are some, on the other hand, whom God has entrusted with much because He sees that they use it wisely in promoting the interests of His Kingdom.   
But, after all, to every man, whether he is rich, or whether he is in the office of the ministry, there may be a close of his stewardship before he dies. The mother has her little children swept away, one after another. This is the message to her, You may no longer be steward. The teacher has his class scattered, or he is, himself, unable to go to the school. The word to him, also, is, You may no longer be steward. The man who went to his work, who might have spoken to his fellow workman, is removed, perhaps, to another land, or he is placed in a position where his mouth is shut. Now he can no longer be steward. Use all opportunities while you have them! Catch them on the wing! Serve God, while you can, today! Today! Today! Today! Let each golden moment have its pressing service rendered unto God, lest it should be said to you, You may no longer be steward.

But we shall soon no longer be stewards in another sense. The hour must come for us to die. Out of our large congregation we have constant reminders that those who have served us as a Church and have served God faithfully in His Church, cannot abide with us forever. One or another, whom we have loved and honored, gives his account and passes to his rest. So will it be in turn with the pastor, with the deacons and with the elders. Do not put away the thought of that day, my fellow workers, as though you were immortal! It may come to us all of a suddenno gray hairs may cover our headsbut while we are yet in the full strength of manly vigor, you or I may be called to give our account! What do you think? What do you think? Could you gather up your feet in the bed and look into eternity without feeling the cold sweat of fear stand upon your brow?   
What do you think? Could you face the great Judgment Seat and say, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith? Oh, God be praised if we are able to say that! What monuments of mercy will you and I be if we are able to say this at the close of our serviceand to hear our Lord say, Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord.   
My fellow member, by the fact that God is continually removing from us one and another, I ask you to remember that you, also, will soon depart. Therefore, be making up your account. Rest in Christ more confidently! Love God more earnestly! Serve your generation more intensely! Live while you liveplay not at living, but live in real earnestand let it never be said of you that you trod so lightly on the sands of time that you left no footprints there! Make your mark upon your age and fill your appointed place, as God shall help you, that when you are gathered to your fathers, you may not be forgotten, but the Church may remember you because in her midst there are children born to God through your means!   
As for the unconverted here, need I tell them that they must soon depart and no longer be stewards? You must go from your business, O Trader. You must go from your merchandise, O Merchant. You must go from your bench, O Artisan. You must go from your machine, O Engineer. You must each depart and go to that place from which no traveler returns. Be ready! Be ready! I will ring the alarm for some of you perhaps my text is a prophecy meant for some man hereGive an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward. You have had children about you and you have taught them blasphemy and drunkenness! Or you have had workmen in your employ and you have laughed at their religion, or aided and abetted them in sin! You have had talent, but you have used that talent in the service of the Evil One! You have had gold, but you have lavished it upon wantonness!  
Now give an account of it all! Ah, Sirs, you may not heed what I say, but you will have to heed what will be said to you at another time! You will see this matter in another light when the death angel shall put his cold, freezing hand upon your shoulder and say to you, Give an account! Give an account! Give an account of your stewardship!   
O Savior, Son of God, put Your pierced hands on these blind souls and give them light that they may be able to render up their account with joy, and not with grief! Give them Grace to believe in Your name and trust in Your atoning Sacrifice, for this is the way of salvation! O poor Sinners, trust in Christ Jesus and Him Crucified! You cannot be saved by your stewardship, any of you, but unfaithful stewardship will ruin you! Christ Crucified is your only hope of salvation! Look unto Him and live! Oh, look unto Him now! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**LUKE 12:13-44.**

Verses 13, 14. And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? Our Lord was a Judge and a Divider, but His sphere of action was spiritualHe did not interfere in the personal disputes of those who gathered round Him.

15. And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a mans life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Christ took advantage of this mans request and made it the text for a sermon against covetousness.

16-19. And He spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years, take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Notice how fond the rich man was of the little pronouns, I, and, my. He lived only for himself and was an embodiment of that covetousness which our Lord abhorred and denounced! What a vivid contrast there is between what the man said to himself and the Lords message to him!

20. But God said unto him, You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? This may also be said to any of youwhere would you be if the Lord said to you, This night your soul shall be required of you?

21-23. So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat; neither for the body, what you shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Do not spend your care on the lower thingscare most for that which is most worth caring formore for the body than for raiment, more for life than for meat, and consequently, more for the immortal spirit than for anything besidesand more for God, even, than for your own soul! Let your cares be rated according to their objectivesto set a caring, anxious care upon the lesser things will be folly, indeed!

24. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouses nor barns and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the fowls? It seems, then, that those that are fed by God are much better fed than those that are fed by men! The ravens know no care, whatever, for God cares for them. And if we could ever bring our hearts into such a condition that we felt that everything to do with us was in Gods hands, we should enter into a blessed, hallowed freedom from care in which we should find a sweet repose of spirit

*Beneath the spreading heavens,   
No creature but is fed.   
And He who feeds the ravens,   
Will give His children bread.*

25, 26. And which of you, by worrying, can add one cubit to his stature? If you, then, are not able to do that thing which is least, why take you thought for the rest? It would be a very small matter to you if you were a foot taller, or if you were a foot shorter. It is not that the making of yourself a cubit taller or shorter would be a small thing to do, but it is a small thing in its resultit is an inconsiderable matter whether a man is tall or short. If you, then, are not able, even, to reduce your stature, or to increase it, take no anxious thought about other things!

27. Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. So that God cares not only for things that have necessities, as ravens have, but for things that have luxuries, as lilies have! When God does anything, He does it well. He is a grand Housekeeper! He does not measure out so many ounces of bread per diem, as if we were in a workhouse, but, they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. The lilies might do as well without their golden hues. They might ripen their seed without the lengthened stems that lift them where they can be observed, but God takes more care of them, even, than Solomon did of himself, for, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Now, dear children of God, if you trust your Heavenly Father, He will see that you have no cause for care. If you trust Him with your souls, He will not give you a bare salvation, but a rich robe of righteousness to cover all your nakedness! When He does any work, He does it after a better fashion than the wisest of men could do it and, Nature herself, working as she does for the lilies, is only God working in another way! But when God, Himself, without the intervention of the laws of Nature, works in the Kingdom of His Grace, He does it perfectlyHe does it gloriously!

28. If, then, God so clothes the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? Your life is not like that of the grass, or the flower of the field that fades on a summers day. God will take care of you and the everlasting things shall have from Him a care greater than He gives to the temporal. Yet how much God really does for flowersflowers that only open their cups in the morning and shut them in death at night! How much of skill and wisdom there is, even, about them! Shall there not be greater skill and wisdom employed upon you who, when you have once begun to bloom in the Light of God, shall go on blooming, flowering and shedding your perfume throughout the endless ages?

29, 30. And seek not you what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, neither be you of doubtful mind. For all these things in the nations of the world seek after and your Father knows that you have need of these things. For you, the immortal, the twice-born, the very bodyguard of Christto live for such things as the men of the world live for is to degrade the peerage of Heavento bring those who are of the blood royal of the skies down to a gross pursuit! No, let your whole thought, heart and life be spent for something higher and better than these thingsand leave the lower cares with your Father!

31, 32. But rather seek you the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not little flock; for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. When Abraham had many sons, he gave to each one of them a portion and sent them away. But Isaac had the family heritage. It is the same with you! The Lord may give to others more than He bestows upon you in this life, but for you He reserves the Kingdom! Are you not content with that, whatever else your Father gives you or withholds from you?

33. Sell what you have and give alms. That is to say, do not merely give a little which you can readily spare, but sometimes even pinch yourselves to relieve the poor!

33, 34. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be, also. You are sure to live for that which is the choicest object of your love. Whatever you think to be first, will be firstand what you love in your heart, you will be sure to follow in your life.

35, 36. Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. Many people are thinking just now of Christs First Adventbut this passage bids us watch for His glorious Second Coming.

37. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. I never read this verse without wondering at the marvelous condescension of our Lord! Even in the day of His appearing in Glory, His thoughts will be more about His people than about HimselfHe shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. We cannot tell when He will come, but, Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He comes, shall find watching.

39-44. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broke into. Be you, therefore, ready also: for the Son of Man comes at an hour when you think not. Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speak You this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who, then, is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his master, when he comes, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say onto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he has. Wonderful words! We cannot at present tell all that they mean, but, by Gods Grace, may they be fulfilled to us when our Lord comes to take us to Himself!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. END OF VOLUME 41 Sermon #518 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE BRIDGELESS GULF   
NO. 518

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 5, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from here to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from there.   
Luke 16:26.**

FOR the last few months I have been led to blow the silver trumpet, sounding forth the love and mercy of our God in Christ. Many times in your hearing I have preached a full Christ for empty sinners, and have set forth the freeness and graciousness of the Divine proclamation which in the Gospel is made to the chief of sinners. I have not, concerning that point, shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. But I feel that I must now blow a blast upon the rough rams hornfor sometimes our congregations need to be reminded of the Law and terrors of God--and of the judgment to come.

Our experience is that the preaching of judgment is greatly blessed of God. We have remarked that a very large number of conversions have occurred under those sermons in which the declaration of Gods wrath against all iniquity has been the most plain and solemn. A thunderstorm clears the air. There are pestilences which would gather beneath the wings of calm which can only be purged away by the lightning flash. When God sends His servant with heavy tidings, His message of alarm cleanses the spiritual atmosphere and kills the sloth, pride, indifference, and lethargy, which otherwise might fall upon the people.

As the sharp needle prepares the way for the thread, so the piercing Law makes a way for the bright silver thread of Divine Grace. The lancet is quite as needful as the healing balm. The Law is our teacher to bring us to Christlike the old Greek pedagogue who led the boy to schoolso the Law leads us to Christ-who teaches and instructs us and makes us wise unto salvation. Those who preached the Law, as well as the Gospel, in the Puritan times, were the most fruitful soul winners. We find our blessed Lord and Master, whose heart was overflowing with compassion, and whose very Nature was love, often dwelling upon the wrath to come.

And indeed, His utterances are more telling and terrible than the most burning threat from the lips of thundering Seers of old. God grant that this morning the effect which so anxiously desire may follow from that burden of the Lord which now weighs so heavily upon me. May the Master I gather out this day a seed unto Himself, who shall be saved from the wrath to come, and be to all eternity the reward of the Redeemers travail.

Lift up your hearts to God, you that know Him and have power with Him, and ask that now the Divine Spirit may work mightily, that hearts may be broken and sinners led to Jesus. Beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.

Human ingenuity has done very much to bridge great gulfs. Scarcely has the world afforded a river so wide that its floods could not be leaped over. Or a torrent so furious that it could not be made to pass under the yoke. High above the foam of Columbias glorious waterfall, man has hung aloft his slender, but substantial road of ironand the shriek of the locomotive is heard above the roar of Niagara. This very week I saw the first chains which span the deep rift through which the Bristol Avon finds its way at Cliftonman has thrown his suspension bridge across the chasm, and men will soon travel where only that which has wings could a little while ago have found a way.

There is, however, one gulf which no human skill or engineering ever shall be able to bridge. There is one chasm which no wing shall ever be able to cross. It is the gulf which divides the world of joy, in which the righteous triumph, from that land of sorrow in which the wicked feel the smart of Jehovahs sword. Whatever other arguments there may be why the righteous should have no communion with the wicked in a future state, beside all these other things, any one of which is enough and sufficient of itself, there is a great gulf fixed, so that there can be no passage from the one world to the other.

I. In trying solemnly to speak upon this matter, I shall commence with thisTHERE IS NO PASSAGE FROM HEAVEN TO HELL. They which would pass from here to you, cannot. Glorified saints cannot visit the prison of lost sinners. Long enough were the righteous mingled with the wickedsufficient was the evil time in which the wheat was choked with the tares. Quite long enough was the period in which the chaff laid upon the same floor, side by side with the wheat. Patience had its perfect work. They did both grow together until the time of the harvest. It is not necessary, now that harvest has come, that they should lie together any longer.

It were inconsistent with the perfect joy and the beatific state of the righteous, with its perfect calm and purity, that sin should be admitted into their midst, or that they should be permitted to find companionships in the abodes of evil. It were not glorious to the Lord Jesus Christ that they should cease from beholding His beauties and adoring His Person, in order to succor His enemies, and comfort His desperate foes. Shall the courtiers of Heaven become traitors to their King, that they may relieve His implacable adversaries? Shall the princes of the blood imperial, who wear eternal coronets, lay aside their robes of honor to become menial servants to the damned in Hellwho would not, when Christ was preached to thembow the knee and kiss the Son? This must not, and cannot be. Besides, the decree of God, like a great mountain of brass, has forever shut the righteous in with holiness, with happiness, with God. And they cannot, if they would, must not, cross the great gulf which divides them from the world of the wicked.

It follows that the most earnest and diligent preacher must, then, renounce all hope of converting sinners. God has raised up some Apostolic spirits whose presence in a nation is like the rising of the sun. Darkness flies before them and the light of salvation streams from them to tens of thousands. When they lift up their hands to preach, God gives them power to shake the gates of Hell. And when they bend the knee to pray, they unlock the gates of Heaven. Men like Baxter, with bursting hearts of love, or Joseph Alleine with glowing tongue, or Whitfield with seraphs fire, or Wesley with cherubs zealthese are the men who bless their ageand are most truly great.

These men can go to the borders of the earth if they will. Their commission is co-extensive with the human raceGo you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the ends of the world. These men are never so happy as when they are preaching. Woe unto them if they preach not the Gospel, and when they preach it, and God helps them, they are like Elihu, refreshed by the effort! They were born to preach the Gospel, and to win sinners to Christ. They are never content except they are fulfilling their high commission.

But they must cease from their labors soon, for in Heaven they are not neededand from Hell they are excluded. O Sinner, even my voice, feeble though it is, may win you to Jesus now. But if you die impenitent, it can never woo you again to a Savior. Now is my time to preach to you and set open Mercys door before you, but then I can never warn you, nor invite you. Then I can never again depict the agonies of my Lord and Master and endeavor to attract you by the story of His love, His dying, bleeding love. No, it will be all over then. They rest from their labors. And their works do follow them. They must bring their sheaves with them, for they cannot return into another field to sownor journey into other broad acres to reap.

Burning as their hearts will still be with Divine love, they will have to exercise it in another way. Their passionate longings for Gods Glory will find other channels in which to flow. They will bow their heads and adore Him day and night. But they can no longer serve Him in Gospel ministry. The ambassador rolls up his commission, for God has run up the black flag of damnation and hangs out no more signals of peace. Poor Sinner, gladly would I win you now, for it is now or never with you and me.

The efforts of the most importunate visitor, the most earnest friend, must cease with death. Some of you have friends who can get nearer to your hearts than I can. You can afford, sometimes, to forget my poor words and go your way to sin again. But you have a sister, and when she pleads with you, you do feel it. You have one loving friend, and when he speaks to you, you cannot be deaf. Your conscience has often been impressed by him and sometimes through him the strivings of the Spirit

have been very mighty with your soul. I love, my Brothers and Sisters, to see you earnest for the souls of others. God may give you some souls whom He will never give to me. And so long as they are saved, though I have a holy covetousness and earnestly desire to bring many to Christ, yet I will as unashamedly rejoice in their salvation by your instrumentality as if it had been accomplished by my own.

Go and labor with all your might. Tell what Christ has done for you. With pleading, loving accents, beseech them to be reconciled to God. But oh, remember, you can only do that in this life, for when the gates are shut, you are shut in for your reward, and all the world is shut out from your efforts. O my Hearer, do you hear this? Not only will there be no public congregations, no Sabbaths, no houses of prayer, but there shall be no private messengers, no earnest Christians who shall privately seek your souls good! What do you say to this? Does not this give an awful value to those tender words of importunate love? Turn at the gentle rebuke, for otherwise you shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.

Those who are nearest and dearest must be divided from you, if you perish in your sins! A mother can put her arms about her childs neck and pray for it here. She may affectionately exhort her son to seek peace with God now. She may earnestly and incessantly follow him with her holy entreatiesbut she can never come to him from the realms of Glory if once he is lost. They which would pass from us to you cannot. Do you hear it, young Man? Those glistening eyes of a mothers love shall never weep again for you. That touching voice which sometimes awoke the echoes of your heart shall never plead again. O ungodly Woman, you shall never see your godly child.

Father, is it that daughter you are thinking of who loved and feared God in childhood, and was taken from you? Did she say to you when she was dying, Follow me to Heaven, my Father? You have heard her voice for the last time. That child will never see her father again unless he turns from his evil ways. Methinks if she could be in Heaven what she was on earth, she would fling her arms about your neck and seek to draw you to the glorious Throne of the Most High. But oh, it cannot be! A just God condemns the impenitent sinner, and just men assent to the Divine sentence.

See then, O you ungodly ones that are present today! You often think our company a great nuisance, and perhaps while I am preaching, my alarming words annoy you. Ah, we shall not annoy you long. Does your mother tease you when she bids you seek the Lord? She will not tease you long! When I bring home the judgment to come, is the subject obnoxious to you? I shall not ask your patience long. We shall be separated. If you go your way, and follow after sin and wrath, there will come a dividing time. And O let me say to youyou would give worlds if you had them! You would give them if they were solid diamonds, to hear again the voice which now fatigues youand to listen once more to those plaintive invitations which vex you, and spoil your mirth!

Ah, how would you bless God if He would let you come back again and have once more those Sabbaths which were so dull and dreary, and permit you to go up once more to the House of God which now, perhaps, is like a prison to your vain and frivolous spirits. O Sirs, I say you may well have patience with us for a little time, and bear with our importunities, for we shall not plague you much longer. We beseech you to come to Jesus. We would pluck you by your garments and beseech you to flee from the wrath to come. Forgive us for being thus in earnest, for even if we should fail with you, you will soon escape the importunities of our love. A few short months of mortal life and then you will be far away from all religious discourses and all spiritual talk of things to come. You will be in your own company, but I warn youthis will yield you no contentment.

Dear Friends, how earnest this ought to make the people of God to work while it is called today. If this is our only time for doing good, let us do good while we can. I hear people sometimes say, Mr. So-and-So does too much. He works too hard. Oh, we none of us do half enough! Do not talk about working too hard for Jesus Christthe thing is impossible. Are souls perishing, and shall I sleep? My idle, lazy Flesh, shall you keep me still while men are dying and Hell is filling? Brothers and Sisters, let us be lukewarm no longer. If God makes us lights in the world, let us spend ourselves as a candle does, which consumes itself by shining.

As the poor work girl, who has but one candle, works with desperate pace because that will soon be burned out, so let us be instant in season and out of seasonwatching, praying, laboring for the souls of men. We are not earnest enough about immortal souls. If we had but a view of the shortness of life, the fleeting character of time, and the terrors of eternal wrath. If we could but see lost souls and understand their unutterable woe, we should shake ourselves from the dust and go forth to work while it is called today.

II. As we cannot go from Heaven to Hell, so the text assures us, NEITHER CAN THEY PASS TO US THAT WOULD COME FROM THERE. The lost spirits in Hell are shut in forever. I see the angel standing at that iron door. I hear the awful key as it grates among the tremendous wards, and when that gate is closed, he hurls the key into the abyss of oblivion! The captives are fast imprisoned, bound in fetters which will never break, in chains which never rust. The sinner cannot come to Heaven for a multitude of reasons.

Among the best, these: First, his own character forbids it. As a man lives and dies, so will he be throughout eternity. The drunkard here will have all a drunkards thirst there without the means of gratifying it. The swearer here will become a yet more ripe and proficient blasphemer. Death does not change but fixes character. It petrifies it. He that is holy let him be holy still. He that is filthy let him be filthy still. The lost man remains a sinner, and a growing sinner, and continues to rebel against

God. Would you have such a man in Heaven? Shall the thief prowl through the streets of the New Jerusalem? Shall the atmosphere of Paradise be polluted by an oath? Shall the songs of angels be disturbed by the ribaldry of licentious conversation?

It cannot be! Heaven were no Heaven if the sinner could be permitted to enter it. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, and as there is no hope of the finally lost ever being born again, the kingdom of God they cannot see. Sinner, if you are not fit for Heaven now, have you any right to hope you ever will be? If you die without God and without hope, where must your portion be? Without a God can you dwell in HeavenGods own dominions? Without hope, can you enter where hope is consummated in full fruition? Never! The enemies of God shall never be permitted to beard Him to His Face and vent their blasphemies in His own palace. They must be driven from His Presence and driven from that Presence forever.

Moreover, not only does the mans character shut him out, but also the sinners doom. What was it? These shall go away into everlasting punishment. If it is everlasting, how can they enter Heaven? What does the Savior say, Where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched. If there is any truth in that metaphor, the lost are lost forever. The worm would die if they entered Heaven, and the fire were quenched if they obtained celestial seats. How does the Holy Spirit put it? Does He not describe the wrath to come as a bottomless pit? It were not such if they could get a handhold and afterwards climb upward to the starry thrones of angels.

Brothers and Sisters, He that dooms men, He that has put it in the strong expression, He that believes not shall be damned, will certainly and literally carry out His own words. And if it is so, it shall never be possible for them to break their prison of fire, and enter the land of joy and peace. Moreover, Sinner, you cannot go out of the prison because Gods Character and Gods Word are against you. Shall God ever cease to be just? If He is just, He must never cease from punishing you when you are finally condemned. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, is the never ceasing cry of cherubimand as long as He is, Holy, Holy, Holy, you can never be acceptable to Him. Shall God ever cease to be true?

And remember, as long as He is true to His own threats, He must and will send His arrows through you and make His fierce wrath to consume you. Then there stands His decree, He that believes not shall be damned. This is the great gulf, that fixed chasm by which the impenitent sinner is fast as firmest destiny, bound, like Prometheus, to the rock forever, never to be loosed in time or in eternity. It must notit shall not beif God is Godif His decree is not a falsehood and a vanity, you must not come out of the place of your torment.   
There is more. Remember, Sinner, there never was but one bridge between fallen man and a holy God. That bridge you reject. The Person of the Mediator, His substitution, His righteousness, His painful death these make the only road from sin to righteousness, from wrath to acceptance. But these you reject. If you should ever be lost you will have finally rejected Christ. And inasmuch as you are not, this morning, saved, O my poor fellow Creature, you are now rejecting Christ. You are as good as saying, Christ died, but not for me. Christ shed His blood to save men, but I will not be saved in His way. Let Him die. I count His death a trifle, and His blood a vanity. I had sooner perish than be saved by Him.

This is what you in effect are saying. I know the words make you shudder. You would not venture to utter them, but that is your feeling. You will not have this Man to reign over you. You will not bow the knee, and kiss the Son. You will still be an adversary to God, and sooner be destroyed than be saved through the Atonement of Christ. Well, now, if you reject the only way, what wonder if having rejected that, there remains no hope? Besides, remember there is no other sacrifice for sin. Scripture expressly tells us that there remains no more sacrifice for sin. Do you think that Jesus will come a second time to die? Shall those Divine hands be stretched again to the wood?

You reject Him now. If He died again, you would reject Him. Shall the head again be pierced with thorns? Shall the side again be rent with the spear? Why, Sinner, if you refuse to have Him now, you would refuse Him could He die a second time. But that cannot be. He has offered an Atonement once and for all, and now He forever sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. No second Atonementno second redemption shall ever be offered for the sins of men.

Besides, remember, there is no Holy Spirit in the pit. The blessed Spirit is here today, and often has He striven with some of you. Do you remember when you trembled like Felix? Do you not remember the time when, like Agrippa, you were almost persuaded? But still all this was put away conscience was hushed. The Spirit of God was quenched. Well, that Spirit can strive with you again, and if He comes forth in His Irresistible strength, if your heart is like a flint, He can break it. And if like iron, He can melt it. But once in the pit, and the Holy Spirit never comes there. That blessed dove shuns the place of wrath. And over souls given up to destruction, never will His life-giving wings be known to brood.

If so, then you cannot be born again and cannot enter Heaven. You cannot be sanctified. And unsanctified spirits cannot have a portion in the skies. So then it is clear enough you cannot possibly pass from Hell to Heaven. Ah, this will be a judgment upon you, a solemn judgment upon you for many things. You do not like the House of God. You shall be shut out of it. You do not love Sunday. You are shut out from the eternal Sunday. The voice of sacred song had no charm in it for you. You shall not join it. The face of God you never loved. You shall never see it. The name

of Jesus Christ was never melodious in your ears. You shall never hear it.

Jesus Christ was preached to you, but you rejected himHis blood you trod beneath your feet. The way to Heaven was freely set open before you, but you would not come to Him that you might have life. There is a road from earth to HeavenSinner, though you have gone into the depths of sin, if you have been the most infamous and most outrageous of offenders, there is still a road for you to Heaven. The harlot, the thief, the profane, the drunkard may yet find mercy through the Divine Grace of Jesus, but

*There are no acts of pardon passed   
In that cold grave to which we haste.   
Only darkness, death and long despair   
Reign in eternal silence there.*

God bless the solemn remarks we make and He shall have the glory. III. But now, once again to change the subject for a few minutes, I have to notice in the third place, that while no persons can pass that bridgeless chasm, so NO THINGS CAN. Nothing can come from Hell to Heaven. Rejoice, you saints in light, triumph in your God for thisno temptation of Satan can ever vex you when once you are landed on the golden strand. You are beyond bowshot of the archenemy. He may howl and bite his iron bands, but his howling cannot terrify and his biting cannot disturb.  
No longer shall you be vexed with the filthy conversation of the ungodly. Lot shall never hear another foul word. You shall not have to say, Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. *No light discourse shall reach your heart, Nor trifles vex your ear.*   
You shall be shut out from everything that belongs to Hell. And remember, you shall be in Heaven. You will be so secure, that the wrath of God which makes Hell, shall never light on you. Your Savior carried it for you. Not a drop of it shall fall upon you. No present pains shall be in Heaven, they are for the lost. No pains of body, no distractions of mind. You shall have no sinsin cannot pass from them to you. You shall be perfectlike your Lord, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing   
*Your inward foes shall all be slain,   
Nor Satan vex your peace again.*  
You shall have no fears for the future. You shall know that your bliss is eternal. This shall always be the honey of your honeycombthat it lasts forever. Millions of years you shall gaze into the face of your Beloved, throughout endless ages you shall bask in the sunlight of His smile.   
This is joy, I say, to the Christian! If he will but think it over it will reconcile him to the hardest strokes of temporary tribulation, and make him rejoice in the hardest toil of this mortal struggle. Courage, Brothers and Sisters, it is but a day or two of wrestling and then the immortal crown an hour or two of fighting and then the everlasting rest! Methinks I see today the angels leaning from the battlements of the celestial palace, and as they mark you, like armed men cutting your way to the gates thereof, they cry to you   
*Come in, come in,   
Eternal glory you shall win.*   
Will you sheathe your swords? Will you stop the conflict? No! Press on and let your true Jerusalem blades cut through soul and spirit, and divide joint and marrow till you reach the summit and the eternal Glory shall be yours!   
IV. Again, we change the strain for a fourth point and this a terrible one. As nothing can come from Hell to Heaven, so nothing heavenly can ever come to Hell. There are rivers of life at Gods right handthose streams can never leap in blessed waterfalls to the lost. No, Lazarus is not permitted to dip the tip of his finger in water to administer the cooling drop to the fire-tormented tongue. Not a drop of heavenly water can ever cross that chasm.   
See then, Sinner, Heaven is rest, perfect restbut there is no rest in Hell. It is labor in the fire, and no ease, no peace, no sleep, no calm, no quieteverlasting stormeternal hurricaneunceasing tempest in the worst disease. There are some respitesspasms of agonybut then no pauses of repose. There is no pause in Hells torments. The dreadful music of the eternal lamentation has not so much as a single stop in it. It is on, on, on, with crash of battle, and dust, and blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.  
Heaven, too, is a place of joy. There, happy fingers sweep celestial chords. There, joyous spirits sing Hosannas day without night. But there is no joy in Hell. For music there is the groan. For joy there is the pang. For sweet fellowship there is the binding up in bundles. For everything that is blissful there is everything that is dolorous. No, I could not exaggerate, that were impossible. I cannot come up to the doleful facts. Therefore I leave them. Nothing of the joy of Heaven can ever come to Hell. Heaven is the place of sweet communion with God   
*There they behold His face,   
And never, never sin.   
There from the rivers of His Grace,   
Drink endless pleasures in.*   
There is no communion with God in Hell. There are prayers, but they are unheard. There are tears, but they are unaccepted. There are cries for pity, but they are all an abomination unto the Lord. God wills not the death of any. He had rather that he should turn unto Him and live, but if that Divine Grace is refused   
*The Lord, in vengeance dressed,   
Shall lift His hand and swear,   
You that despised My promised rest   
Shall have no portion there.*   
Tell me what Heaven is, if you will, and I must say of any description that you give of its joys, that there is none of them in Tophet, for Heavens blessings cannot cross from the celestial regions to the infernal prison. No, it is sorrow without relief, misery without hopeand here is the pang of itit is death without end. There is only one thing that I know of in which Heaven is like Hellit is eternal. The wrath to come, the wrath to come, the wrath to come, forever and forever spending itself and yet never being spent.   
And now, would to God, I could speak with you as my heart desires. For this is my only opportunity, since, as I have already said, I can do this no more if I am saved and if you are lost. Spare me, then, two or three minutes while I close this poor discourse of mine by trying to reason with those of you who are unconverted. I have had little to say to Gods people this morning. I may comfort them in the evening, but this morning I have to deal with you who fear not God. Many of you now present are unconverted. I will never flatter you by preaching to you as though you were all Christians.

The Lord my God knows there is many a heart here that never was broken. There is many a spirit here that never trembled before the majesty of infinite justice, and never kissed the outstretched scepter of a crucified Redeemer. You know this, some of you. You know you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. I do not mean you, alone, who live in open sin. But I mean you who are amiable, excellent, admirable in your carriage and deportmentbut yet the love of God is not in you. There is no fault to be found with your outward character, perhaps, but you have not been born again. You have never passed from death unto life.   
And remember, Sirs, there is the same Hell for the most excellent as for the most abominable, unless you fly to ChristFor other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. And if you believe not in Him, you shall die in your sins, for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Come, then, let me plead with you, and I will ask you a questiondo you believe all this? Do you believe that there is a Hell? Do you believe that there is a Heaven to be lost? If you profess that you do not so believe, I have done with you. God bring you to a better mind.   
But what did you come here for? Why do you profess to be a Christian if you reject the Christians inspired Book? Become an infidel and be honest. For my part, modern infidelity never gives me any alarm. I had as soon see you outwardly infidels, as to hear you pretend to be Christians and yet disbelieve what this Book teaches. I like honesty, and it seems to me that when a man honestly says, I shall not make a profession of believing what I do not believe, that there is at least one virtue in him. And we may hope that others may find soil to grow in.   
But you that profess to be religious and attend your Church or your Chapel, and yet do not believe the Revelation of God, what can I say to you, but that your damnation will be most just. I think I hear many of you say, Believe it, Sir, oh, we never doubted it! We learned it in our earliest childhood, we have heard it always, and we never ventured to doubt. Ah, well then, I ask youare you in your sober senses to believe that there is a Hell and not seek to escape from it? Do you believe there is a wrath to come, and that it may fall upon you in the next minute, for you may be dead, and never leave this House of Prayerand yet do you sit easy in your pews? Or, are you mad? Has sin so besotted you with its foul intoxication, that you cannot think? For if you can think, and there is an angry God who will punish with the awful force of His Omnipotence, how is it that you can be at ease in Zion?   
Let me ask you another questionif these things are so, have you used your senses in giving a preference to the pleasures of this life beyond the joys of Heavenin following the pleasures of today, when you know they will be followed with the miseries of eternity? Do not be mistaken, I do not mean to say that a Christian is without pleasureswe have the highest and purest pleasure that mortal or immortal can know. We have not the pleasures of sin, but we have higher, more delightful and deeper pleasures. But this is what I meanwill you spend yourselves in sinful pleasure? Will you occupy your time with lust, or drunkenness, or with the frivolities of fashionable life, and do you think that these are worth the expense that they will cause?   
Oh, said one to me, who holds a high position in society, as I talked with him a long time after having preached earnestly the Gospelhe took me by the button and he said, it does seem to me to be an awful thing, that I, knowing as I do what will be my lot if I live and die as I am, should still act as I do. When you are with me, he said, and I listen to a solemn address, I think there shall come a change over me. I will serve God. But, O Sir, you do not know the temptations of my life! You do not know how it is when I get into the midst of pomp and vanities and perhaps mingle with men who ridicule all thoughts of religion, it all goesand I am such a fool that I sell my soulsell my soul for it.   
Oh, there are such fools here todaywho sell their souls for a little sinone or two whirls in the worlds mad dance and then the devil is your partner and your mirth is over. I ask you to use your reason and judge whether it is worth your while to gain the whole world and lose your own soul?   
I shall put it to you in another way. How is it that you do not lay hold of Christ, since this is the only time when there is a probability that Christ can be laid hold of? I will tell you why it is. You do not love Christ. You love sin. Or else you are too proud to come to Christ. You think yourselves good enough, and you think that Christ is not for such as you are, but only for great sinners and the lowest of the low. O Sirs, is your pride such a fine thing that you will be damned in order to maintain its dignity? Throw your pride down, come as a sinner must come, and lay hold of Jesus Christ. Or if it is your sin which hinders, may God the Holy Spirit help you to pluck out the right eye, and cast off a right arm sooner than having two eyes and two arms to be cast into Hell fire.   
But, says one, how may I lay hold on Christ? May the blessed Spirit enable you to do it. Here it istrust Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Conscious that you deserve His wrath, trembling because of His terrible Law, look to Jesus. There hangs a bleeding Savior. Methinks these eyes can see Him bleeding there. God eternal, He by whom the Heaven of heavens were Made, and the earth and the fullness thereof, takes upon Himself the form of Man and hangs upon the tree of the curse   
*See from His head, His hands, His feet,   
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!   
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,   
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*   
There is life in a look at that Crucified One, there is life at this moment for you! Will you glance at Him with a tearful eye?   
Jesus slaughtered, martyred, murdered for my sake, I do believe in You. Here at Your feet I throw myself, all guilty, polluted, foul. Let Your blood drop on me. Turn Your eyes upon me. Say to me, I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with the bands of My kindness have I drawn you. Come and welcome, Sinnercome.   
I have but preached the Law to you out of love. God knows how these hard things, as I speak them, make my heart bleed blood. O that you would believe in Jesus! He is freely preached to youaccept Him. May the Spirit of God lead you now to accept Him. These are no hard terms, no stern conditions of a bloodthirsty tyrant. He does but say, Bow the knee and kiss the Son. Come and welcome, Sinnercome.   
Young Man, will you be saved or not? You, Sinner yonder, with your gray head, approaching the approach of death, will you believe in Christ or not? It may be this is your last timeyou shall never hear the Gospel faithfully and affectionately pressed home upon you again. Will you have Jesus to be yours? Spirit of God, lead that heart to say, Yes, Lord, I will. And as the acceptance is heard on earth, may it be registered in Heaven and may salvation come to that mans heart this day!   
The Lord bless you all, every one of you. And when He gathers His people together, may I and you, every one of us, by His Grace, be found at His right hand, to see His smiling face. Amen.

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A PREACHER FROM THE DEAD   
NO. 143

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 26, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**And He said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. Luke 16:31.**

MAN is very loath to think ill of himself. The most of mankind are very prone to indulge in apologies for sin. They say, If we had lived in better times we had been better men. If we had been born into this world under happier auspices we should have been holier. And if we had been placed in more excellent circumstances we should have been more inclined to be right. The mass of men, when they seek the cause of their sin, seek it anywhere but in the right place. They will not blame their own nature for it. They will not find fault with their own corrupt heart but they will lay the blame anywhere else.

Some of them find fault with their peculiar position. If, says one, I had been born rich, instead of being poor, I should not have been dishonest. Or if, says another, I had been born in middle life, instead of being rich, I should not have been exposed to such temptations of lust and pride as I am now. But my very condition is so adverse to piety that I am compelled by the place I hold in society to be anything but what I ought to be. Others turn round and find fault with the whole of society. They say that the whole organism of society is wrong. They tell us that everything in government, everything that concerns the State, everything which melts men into commonwealths is all so bad that they cannot be good while things are what they are.

They must have a revolution, they must upset everythingthen they think they could be holy! Many on the other hand throw the blame on their training. If they had not been so brought up by their parents, if they had not been so exposed in their youth they would not have been what they are. It is their parents fault. The sin lay at their fathers or their mothers door. Or it is their constitution. Hear them speak for themselves, If I had such a temper as So-and-So, what a good man I would be! But with my headstrong disposition it is impossible. It is all very well for you to talk to me but men have different turns of mind and my turn of mind is such that I could not by any means be a serious character.

And so he throws the blame on his constitution. Others go a deal farther and throw the blame on the ministry. If, say they, at one time the minister had been more earnest in preaching, I should have been a better man. If it had been my privilege to sit under sounder doctrine and hear

the Word more faithfully preached, I should have been better. Or else they lay it at the door of professors of religion and say, If the Church were more consistent, if there were no hypocrites and no formaliststhen we should reform! Ah, Sirs, you are putting the saddle on the wrong horse you are laying the burden on the wrong back.

The blame is in your hearts, nowhere else. If your hearts were renewed you would be better. But until that is done, if society were remodeled to perfection, if ministers were angels and professors of religion were seraphs, you would be none the better. And having less excuse for your sin you would be doubly guilty and perish with a more terrible destruction. But yet men will always be saying that if things were different they would be different, too. But the difference must be made in themselves before they can begin in the right place.

Among other whims which have occurred to the human mind, such an one as that of my text may sometimes have arisen. If, said the rich man in Hell, if one should arise from the dead, if Lazarus should go from Heaven to preach, my hardened Brethren would repent. And some have been apt to say, If my aged father, or some venerable Patriarch could rise from the dead and preach, we should all of us turn to God. That is another way of casting the blame in the wrong quarter. We shall endeavor, if we can, to refute such a supposition as that this morning and affirm most strenuously the doctrine of the text, that, If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Let us proceed with this subject.

Suppose a preacher should come from another world to preach to us we must naturally suppose that he came from Heaven. Even the rich man did not ask that he or any of his compeers in torment might go out of Hell to preach. Spirits that are lost and given up to unutterable wickedness could not visit this earth. And if they did they could not preach the Truth, nor lead us on the road to Heaven which they had not trod themselves. The advent of a damned spirit upon earth would be a curse, a blight, a withering blastwe need not suppose that such a thing ever did or could occur.

The preacher from another world, if such could come, must come from Heaven. He must be a Lazarus who had lain in Abrahams bosom, a pure, perfect and holy being. Now, imagine for a moment that such an one had descended upon earth. Suppose that we heard tomorrow a sudden piece of newsthat a venerable spirit who had been a long time buried, had on a sudden burst his cerements, lifted up his coffin lid and was now preaching the Word of Life. Oh, what a rush there would be to hear him preach! What place in this wide world would be large enough to hold his massive congregations? How would you rush to listen to him! How many thousands of portraits would be published of him, representing him in the dread winding sheet of death, or as an angel fresh from Heaven?

Oh, how would this city be stirredand not this city only but this whole land! Nations far remote would soon hear the news. And every ship would be freighted with passengers bringing men and women to hear this wondrous preacher and traveler who had returned from the brook unknown. And how would you listen! And how solemnly would you gaze at that unearthly specter! And how would your ears be attentive to his every word! His faintest syllable would be caught and published everywhere throughout the worldthe utterances of a man who had been dead and was alive again! And we are very apt to suppose that if such a thing should happen there would be numberless conversionsfor surely the congregations thus attracted would be immensely blessed.

Many hardened sinners would be led to repent. Hundreds of halters would be made to decide and great good would be done. Ah, stop! Though the first part of the fairy dream should occur, the last would not. If someone should rise from the dead, sinners would no more repent through his preaching than through the preaching of any other. God might bless such preaching to salvation, if He pleased. But in itself there would be no more power in the preaching of the sheeted dead, or of the glorified spirit, than there is in the preaching of feeble man today. Though one should rise from the dead, they would not repent.

But yet, many men would suppose that advantages would arise from the resurrection of a saint who could testify to what he had seen and heard. Now, the advantages, I suppose, could only be three. Some would say there would be advantage in the strength of evidence which such a man could give to the Truth of Scripture. For you would say, If a man did actually come from the pearly-gated city of Jerusalemthe home of the blessedthen there would be no more dispute about the truth of Revelation. That would be settled.

Some would suppose that he could tell us more than Moses and the Prophets had told us and that there would be an advantage in the instruction which he could confer, as well as in the evidence which he would bear. And, thirdly, there may be some who suppose that it would be an advantage gained in the manner in which such an one would speak. For surely, say they, he would speak with great eloquence, with a far mightier power and with a deeper feeling than any common preacher who had never beheld the solemnities of another world. Now, these three points one after another and we think we will settle them.

I. First, it is thought that if one did come from the dead to preach, there would be A CONFIRMATION OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL and a testimony borne at which jeering infidelity would stand aghast in silence. Stop, we will see about that. We do not think so. We believe that the resurrection of one dead man today to come into this hall and preach would be no confirmation of the Gospel to any person here present who

does not believe it already.

If, my Friends, the testimony of one man who had been raised from the dead were of any value for the confirming of the Gospel would not God have used it before now? This shall be my first argument. It is undoubtedly true that some have risen from the dead. We find accounts in Holy Scripture of some men who by the power of Christ Jesus, or through the instrumentality of Prophets, were raised from the dead. But you will note this memorable factthat they never any of them spoke one word which is recordedby way of telling us what they saw while they were dead.

I shall not enter into any discussion as to whether their souls slept during the time of their death, or whether they were in Heaven or not. That would be a discussion without profit, only gendering disputes which could yield no fruit. I only say it is memorable that there is not a record of any one of them having given any description of what they saw while they were dead. Oh, what secrets might he have told, who had laid in his grave four days! Do you not suppose that his sisters questioned him? Do you not think that they asked him what he sawwhether he had stood before the burning Throne of God and been judged for the things done in his body and whether he had entered into rest?

But, however they may have asked, it is certain he gave no answer for had he given an answer we should have known it by now. Tradition would have cherished the record. And do you remember, when Paul once preached a long sermon, even until midnight? There was a young man in the third loft named Eutychus who fell asleep and fell down and was taken up dead. Paul came down and prayed and Eutychus was restored to life. But did Eutychus get up and preach after he had come from the dead? No. The thought never seems to have struck a single person in the assembly.

Paul went on with his sermon and they sat and listened to him and did not care one fig about what Eutychus had seen. For Eutychus had nothing more to tell them than Paul had. Of all the number of those who by Divine might have been brought again from the shades of death, I repeat the assertionwe have not one secret told. We have not one mystery unraveled by them all. Now, God knows best. We will not compare our surmises to Divine decision. If God decided that resurrected men should be silent, it was best it should be. Their testimony would have been of little worth or help to us, or else it would have been borne.

But again, I think it will strike our minds at once that if this very day a man should rise from his tomb and come here to affirm the Truth of the Gospel, the infidel world would be no more near believing than it is now. Here comes Mr. Infidel Critic. He denies the evidences of the Bible evidences which so clearly prove its authenticitythat we are obliged to believe him to be either blasphemous or senselessand we leave him his choice between the two. But he dares to deny the Truth of Holy Scripture and will have it that all the miracles whereby it is attested are untrue and false.

Do you think that one who had risen from the dead would persuade such a man as that to believe? What? When Gods whole creation having been ransacked by the hand of science has only testified to the truth of Revelationwhen the whole history of buried cities and departed nations has but preached out the truth that the Bible is truewhen every strip of land in the East has been an exposition and a confirmation of the prophecies of Scripture? If men are yet unconvinced do you suppose that one dead man rising from the tomb would convince them?

No. I see the critical blasphemer already armed for his prey. Listen to himI am not quite sure that you ever were dead, Sir. You profess to be risen from the dead. I do not believe you. You say you have been dead and have gone to Heaven. My dear man you were in a trance. You must bring proof from the parish register that you were dead. The proof is brought that he was dead. Well, now you must prove that you were buried. It is proved that he was buried and it is proved that some sexton in old times did take up his dry bones and cast his dust in the air.

That is very good. Now I want you to prove that you are the identical man that was buried. Well I am, I know I am. I tell you as an honest man I have been to Heaven and I have come back again. Well then, says the infidel, it is not consistent with reason. It is ridiculous to suppose that a man who was dead and buried could ever come to life again and so I dont believe you. I tell you so straight to your face. That is how men would answer him. And instead of having only the sin of denying many miracles, men would have to add to it the guilt of denying another. But they would not be so much as a tithe of an inch nearer to conviction. And certainly, if the wonder were done in some far-off land and only reported to the rest of the world, I can suppose that the whole infidel world would exclaim, Simple childish tales and such traditions have been current elsewhere. But we are sensible men, we do not believe them.

Although a Churchyard should start into life and stand up before the infidel who denies the Truth of Christianity, I declare I do not believe there would be enough evidence in all the Churchyards in the world to convince him. Infidelity would still cry for something more. It is like the horseleech. It cries, Give, give! Prove a point to an infidel and he wants it proved again. Let it be as clear as noonday to him from the testimony of many witnesses, yet does he not believe it. In fact, he does believe it. But he pretends not to do so and is an infidel in spite of himself. But certainly the dead mans rising would be little worth for the conviction of such men.

But remember, my dear Friends, that the most numerous class of unbelievers are a set of people who never think at all. There are a great number of people in this land that eat and drink and everything else except think. At least they think enough to take their shop shutters down

in the morning and put them up at night. They think enough to know a little about the rising of the funds, or the rate of interest, or something like how articles are selling or the price of bread. But their brains seem to be given them for nothing at all except to meditate upon bread and cheese.

To them religion is a matter of very small concern. They dare say the Bible is very true. They dare say religion is all right. But it does not often trouble them much. They suppose they are Christians. For were they not christened when they were babies? They must be Christiansat least they suppose so but they never sit down to enquire what religion is. They sometimes go to Church and Chapel and elsewhere. But it does not signify much to them. One minister may contradict another but they do not know. They dare say they are both right. One minister may fall foul of another in almost every doctrine.

It does not matter and they pass over religion with the strange idea God Almighty will not ask us where we went to, I dare say. They do not exercise their judgments at all. Thinking is such hard work for them that they never trouble themselves at all about it. Now, if a man were to rise from the dead tomorrow these people would never be startled. Yes, yes, they would go and see him once, just as they go and see any other curiosity, the living skeleton, or Tom Thumb. They would talk about him a good deal and say, Theres a man risen from the dead, and possibly some winters evening they might read one of his sermons. But they would never give themselves trouble to think whether his testimony was worth anything or not.

No, they are such blocks they never could be stirred. And if the ghost were to come to any of their houses the most they would feel would be they were in a fearful fright. But as to what he saidthat would never exercise their lead brains and never stir their stony senses. Though one should rise from the dead, the great mass of these people never would be affected.

And, besides my Friends, if men will not believe the witness of God, it is impossible that they should believe the witness of man. God spoke from the top of Sinai and by Moses in the Book of the Law. He spoke by the many Prophets in the Old Testament and especially His own Word by His own Son, who has brought immortality to light by the Gospel. If these cannot convince men, then there is nothing in the world that can of itself accomplish the work. No, if God speak once but man regards him not, we need not wonder that we have to preach many a time without being regarded. And we should not harbor the thought that some men who had risen from the dead would have a greater power to convince than the Words of God.

If this Bible is not enough to convert youapart from the Spirit (and certainly it is not)then there is nothing in the world that can, apart from His influence. And if the Revelation which God has given of His Son Jesus Christ in this blessed bookif the Holy Scripture is not in the hands of God enough to bring you to the faith of Christthough an angel from Heaven or the saints from Glorythough God Himself should descend on earth to preach to youyou would go on unwed and unblest. If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. That is the first point.

II. It is imagined, however, that if one of the spirits of the just made perfect would come to earth, even if he did not produce a most satisfactory testimony to the minds of skeptics, he would yet be able to give abundant information concerning the kingdom of Heaven. Surely, some would say, if Lazarus had come from the bosom of Abraham, he could have unfolded a tale that would have made our hair stand upright while he talked of the torments of the rich man. Surely, if he had looked from the gates of bliss he might have told us about the worm that dies not and the fire that never can be quenchedsome horrible details, some thrilling words of horror and of terror he might have utteredwhich would have unfolded to us more of the future state of the lost than we know now.

And, says the bright-eyed Believer, if he had come on earth he might have told us of the saints everlasting resthe might have pictured to us that glorious city which has the Lord God for its eternal lightthe streets whereof are of gold and its gates of pearl. Oh, how sweetly would he have sung upon the bosom of Christ and the felicity of the blessed. He had been

*Up where eternal ages roll;   
Where solid pleasures never die,   
And fruits immortal feast the soul.*

Surely he would have brought down with him some handfuls of the clusters of Eshcol. He would have been able to tell us some celestial secrets which would have cheered our hearts and nerved us to run the Heavenly race and put a cheerful courage on.

Stop! That is a dream, too. A spirit of the just descending from Heaven could tell us no more that would be of any use to us than we know already. What more could that spirit from Heaven tell us of the pains of Hell than we already know? Is not the Bible explicit enough? Did not the lips of Christ dreadfully portray the lake of fire? Did He not, even He who went over men, did He not in awful language tell us that God would say at last, Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? Do you need more thrilling words than these? The worm that dies not and the fire that is not quenched. Do you need more terrible warnings than theseThe wicked shall be cast into Hell, with all the nations that forget God? Do you want more awful warnings than this? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings. What? Do you

want a fuller declaration than the Words of God? Tophet is prepared of old. The pile thereof is fire and much wood. The breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone does kindle it. You cannot want more than Scripture gives of that. Even that you try to run away from and escape. You say the Bible is too horrible and tells you too much of damnation and Hell. Sirs, if you think there is too much there and therefore reject it, would you stand for an instant to listen to one who should tell you more? No. You do not wish to know more, nor would it be of any use to you if you did.

Do you need more details concerning the Judgmentthat day of wrath to which each of us is drawing near? Are we not told that the king shall sit on the Throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all people. And He shall divide them the one from the other, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats? Suppose there were one here who had seen the solemn preparation for the great assizeone who had stood where the Throne is to be planted and had marked the future with a more piercing eye than ours. Yet of what good would it be to us? Could he tell us more than Holy Writ has told us nowat least, any which would be more profitable? Perhaps he knows no more than we. And one thing I am sure of he could not tell us more about the rule of judgment than we know now.

Spirit that has returned from another world, tell me, how are men judged? Why are they condemned? Why are they saved? I hear him say, Men are condemned because of sin. Read the Ten Commandments of Moses and you will find the ten great condemnations whereby men are forever cut off. I knew that before, bright Spirit. You have told me nothing! No, says he, and nothing can I tell. Because I was hungry and you gave Me no meat. I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink. I was sick and you visited Me not. I was in prison and you came not unto Me. Therefore, inasmuch as you did it not unto one of the least of these My Brethren, you did it not to Me. Depart, you cursed!

Why, Spirit, was that the word of the King? It was, says he. I have read that, too. You have told me nothing new. If you do not know the difference between right and wrong from reading the Scriptureyou would not know it if a spirit should tell you. If you do not know the road to Hell and the road to Heaven from the Bible itselfyou would never know it at all. No book could be more clear, no Revelation more distinct, no testimony more plain. And since without the agency of the Spirit, these testimonies are insufficient for salvation, it follows that no further declaration would avail. Salvation is ascribed wholly to God and mans ruin only to man. What more could a spirit tell us than a distinct declaration of the two great truthsO Israel, you have destroyed yourself. But in Me is your help found?

Beloved, we do solemnly say again, that Holy Scripture is so perfect and so complete, that it cannot want the supplement of any declaration concerning a future state. All that you ought to know concerning the future you may know from Holy Scripture. It is not right to say with Young

*My hopes and fears start up alarmed,   
And over lifes narrow verge look down,   
On what? A bottomless abyss,   
A dread eternity.*

It is not right to say thatas if it were all we know. Blessed be God, the saint does not look down upon a bottomless abyss! He looks up to the celestial city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God!

Nor do even the wicked look down upon an unknown abyss. For to them it is clearly revealed. Though eye has not seen, nor ear heard the tortures of the lost, yet has Holy Scripture sufficiently told us of them to make it a well-mapped roadso that when they meet with death and Hell and terror, it shall be no new thing. For they heard of it before and it was distinctly revealed to them. Nothing more could we know that would be of any use. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, if to know more of the future state would be a blessing for us, God would not withhold it. There can be no more told us. If what you know would not persuade you, Neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

III. Yet some say, SURELY IF THERE WERE NO GAIN IN MATTER THERE WOULD BE A GAIN IN MANNER. Oh, if such a spirit had descended from the spheres, how would he preach! What celestial eloquence would flow from his lips! How majestically would he word his speech! How mightily would he move his hearers! What marvelous words would he utter! What sentences that might start us from our feet and make us quiver with their thrilling influence! There would be no dullness in such a preacher. It would be no fatigue to hear him. There would be no want of affection in him and surely no want of earnestness. We might well be pleased to hear him every day and never weary with his wondrous speech. Such a preacher earth has never heard. Oh, if he would but come! How would we listen!Stop! That, too, is but a dream.

I do believe that Lazarus from Abrahams bosom would not be so good a preacher as a man who has not died but whose lips have been touched with a live coal from off the altar. Instead of his being better, I cannot see that he would be quite as good. Could a spirit from the other world speak to you more solemnly than Moses and the Prophets have spoken? Or could they speak more solemnly than you have heard the word spoken to you at different times already? O Sirs, some of you have heard sermons that have been as solemn as death and as serious as the grave. I can recall to some of your memories seasons when you have sat beneath the sound of the Word wondering and trembling all the while. It seemed as if the minister had taken to himself, by Gods grace, bow and arrows and was making your conscience the target at which his shafts were leveled.

You have not known where you wereyou have been so grievously frightened and smitten with terror that your knees did knock together and your eyes ran with tears. What more do you want than that? If that sol

emn preaching of some mighty preacher whom God had inspired for the timeif that did not save youwhat can save youapart from the influence of the Holy Spirit? And oh, you have heard more solemn preaching than that. You had a little daughter once. That child of yours had been to the Sabbath-School. It came home and was sick unto death. You watched it by night and day and the fever grew upon it. And you saw that it must die.

You have not forgotten yet how your little daughter Mary preached you a sermon that was solemn indeedjust before she departed she took your hand in her little hand and she said, Father, I am going to Heaven. Will you follow me? That was a solemn sermon to you. What more could sheeted dead have said? You have not forgotten how when your father lay dying(a holy man of God he had been in his day and served his Master well)you with your brothers and sisters stood around the bed and he addressed you one by one. Woman! You have not forgotten yet, despite all your sin and wickedness since then, how he looked you in the face and said, My daughter, it were better for you that you had never been born than that you should be a despiser of Christ and a neglecter of His salvation.

And you have not forgotten how he looked when with solemn tears in his eyes he addressed you and said, My children, I charge you by death and by eternity. I charge you, if you love your own souls despise not the Gospel of Christ. Forsake your follies and turn unto God and live. What preacher do you want better than that? What voice more solemn than the voice of your own parent upon the confines of eternity?

And you have not yet escaped from the influence of another solemn scene. You had a friend, a so-called friend. He was a traitorone who lived in sin and rebelled against God with a high hand and an outstretched arm. You remember him on his deathbedwhen he lay near to death and terrors got hold of him. The flames of Hell began to get their grip of him before he had departed. You have not yet forgotten his shrieks, his screamsyou have not quite got from your vision in your dreams that hand through which the fingernails were almost pierced in agonyand that face, contorted with direful twitching of dismay. You have not escaped yet from that horrid yell with which the spirit entered the realm of darkness and forsook the land of the living. What more of a preacher do you want? Have you heard this preaching and yet have you not repented? Then verily, if after all this you are still hardenedneither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Ah, but you say, you want someone to preach to you with more feeling. Then, Sir, you cannot have him in the preacher you desire. A spirit from Heaven could not be a feeling preacher. It would be impossible for Lazarus, who had been in Abrahams bosom, to preach to you with emotion. As a perfect being, of course he must be supremely happy. Imagine this morning a supremely happy being preaching to you, about repentance and the wrath of God. Do you see him? There is a placid smile ever upon his brow. The light of Heaven gilds his facehe is talking about the torments of Hellit was the place for sighs and groans. But he cannot sigh, his face is just as placid as ever.

He is specking of the torments of the wickedit is the time for tears. He cannot weep. That were incompatible with blessedness. The man is preaching of dreadful things with a smile upon his face. There is summer on his brow and winter on his lipsHeaven in his eyes and Hell in his mouth. You could not bear such a preacher. He would seem to mock you. Yes, it needs a man to preach to a man like yourselves. One who is capable of feeling. We need one who, when he preaches of Christ, smiles on his hearers with lovewho, when he tells of terror, quails in his own spirit while he utters the wrath of God. The great power of preaching, next to the power of Gods Spirit, lies in the preachers feeling it.

We shall never do much good in preaching unless we feel what we utter. Knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men. Now a glorified spirit from Heaven could not feel these things. He could show but little emotion. True, he could speak of the glories of Heaven. And how would his face grow brighter and brighter and brighteras he told the wonders of that upper world! But when he came to cry, Flee from the wrath to come, the voice would sound as sweet when he spoke of death and judgment, as when he spoke of glory. And that would make sad discord, the sound not answering to the sensethe modulations of his voice being unfit to express the idea upon the mind.

Such a preacher could not be a powerful preacher even though he came again from the dead. And one thing we may sayhe could not preach more closely home to you than you have had the Truth preached. I shall not say that you have had preaching put very close to you from the pulpit. But I have strived to be very personal sometimesI have not shunned to point some of you out in the congregation and give you a word of rebuke such as you could not mistake. If I knew that any of you were indulging in sin I have not spared you. I bless God that I am not afraid to be a personal preacher and to shoot the arrow at each separate man when he needs it.

But, nevertheless, I cannot preach home to you as I would. You are all thinking your neighbor is intended, when it is yourself. But you have had a personal preacher once. There was a great preacher called at your house one dayhis name was Cholera. A terrible preacher he! With grim words and hard accent he came and laid his hand upon your wife. And then he put his other hand on you and you grew cold and well-near stiff. You remember how he preached to you then? He made your conscience ring again and again. He would not let you lie still. He cried aloud concerning your sin and your iniquity. He brought all your past life to light and set

all your evil conduct in review.

From your childhood even up till then he led you through all your wanderingsand then he took the whip of the Law and began to plow your back with furrows. He frightened you with the wrath to come. You sent for the minister. You bade him pray. You thought you prayed yourself. And after all thathe had come on a fruitless errandno good had been done to you. You had been a little startled and a little stirred but you are today what you were then, unsaved and unconverted. Then, Sir, you would not be converted though one rose from the dead.

You have been wrecked at sea. You have been cast into the jaws of the grave by fever. You have been nearly smitten to death by accident. And yet, with all this personal preaching and with Mr. Conscience thundering in your ears you are today unconverted. Then learn this truththat no outward means in the world can ever bring you to the footstool of Divine Grace and make you a Christian, if Moses and the Prophets have failed. All that can be done now is thisGod the Spirit must bless the Word to you. Otherwise conscience cannot awaken you, reason cannot awaken you, powerful appeals cannot awaken you, persuasion cannot bring you to Christ.

Nothing will ever do it except God the Holy Spirit. Oh, do you feel that you are drawn this morning? Does some sweet hand draw you to Christ and does some blessed voice say, Come to Jesus, Sinner? There is hope for you. That IS Gods Spirit. Bless Him for it! He is drawing you by the bands of love and the cords of a man. But oh, if you are not drawn and left to yourself, you will surely die.

Brothers and Sisters in the faith, let us lift up our prayers to God for sinners that they may be drawn to Christ. That they may be led to come, all guilty and burdened and look to Jesus to be lightened. And that they may be persuaded, by the quickening power of the Spirit, to take Christ to be their All-in-Allknowing that they themselves are nothing at all. O God the Holy Spirit bless these words, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen and Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1318 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

INCREASED FAITH THE STRENGTH OF PEACE PRINCIPLES   
NO. 1318

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 15, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**The Apostle said unto the Lord, increase our faith. Luke 17:5.**

THE sermon of last Sabbath morning, [#1317, Overcome Evil with Good] in which I earnestly endeavored to inculcate the doctrine of overcoming evil with good and the frank and full forgiveness of all injuries for Christs sake, has raised much discussion. I know that it startled a great many of you and that you have a great many questions among yourselves as to whether such precepts are practicable by ordinary Christians. At that I am not at all surprised, because when our Lord preached the same doctrine, His disciples were so astonished that the Apostles exclaimed in surprise, Lord, increase our faith.

It is most important in this case to see the connection of the text, or you will fail to see its drift and bearings. It was not for the sake of working miracles that the Apostles sought increased faith. It was not in order to bear their present or future trials and neither was it to enable them to receive some mysterious article of the faith. Their prayer referred to a common everyday duty enjoined by the Gospelthe forgiving those who do us wrongfor the previous verses are to this effect, Take heed to yourselves. If your brother trespasses against you, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him. And if he trespasses against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turns again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

And it was upon hearing this that the Apostles cried, Increase our faith. If you have been surprised, dear Friends, at the high standard of Christian duty which my Lord has laid down for you, I only trust your surprise may drive you to the same resort as it did those first servants of the Lord and compel you to appeal for help to Him who issued the command. Will He not help us in walking in His ways? When we feel that His commandments are exceedingly broad, to whom should we appeal for aid but to Him who is our Leader in all holy conversion and godliness? He will not set you the task and refuse you His assistance in performing it!

Observe that these Apostles did not, because of their having sinned against this precept in former times, conclude that they had no faith. They did not conclude, because the precept was so much above them that, therefore, they were unbelievers. Despair is no help to Christian duty! To doubt our discipleship will not help us to obey our Lord. If any of you have cut yourselves off from the household of faith because you fall short of the noblest forms of Christian love, I entreat you to begin again and, instead of doubting the existence of your faith, ask to have it increased. There is a

Fountain opened for your past uncleannessand sanctifying power for your future lives! Apply to Jesus, at once, for the double deliverance, and doubt not that He will deal graciously with you.

Neither did the disciples reject the precept as utterly impossible, nor excuse themselves from it on the ground that in their peculiar circumstances it must be modified. They did not complain that it was too much to expect of human nature, nor did they regard the command as only fit for dwellers in Utopia. No, they respected the precept which surprised them and admired the virtue which astonished them. As loyal followers of the Lord Jesus, they felt bound to follow where He led the way, for they believed that He was too wise to issue an impossible command, too good to teach an impracticable code of morals and too honest to set up a standard to which no mortal could, in any measure, attain. They looked on His command and they felt such confidence in Him that, instead of drawing back, they resolved that it should be obeyed at all costs.

Their resolve was to do His bidding, but feeling that they could not achieve it in their own strength, they began to pray and their prayer was for faith. They felt that only faith could work such a wonder of patient love! It was far out of the ordinary line of actionflesh and blood could not accomplish it, mere resolve would not achieve itfaith must do it and even faith, itself, would need strengthening or it would fail in the attempt. They felt, also, that the kind of faith which could forgive to 70 times seven must be supernatural and not such as they could grow in their own breasts without Divine assistance and, therefore, they said to the Lord, Increase our faith. They needed such faith as He could give in order that they might perform such duties as He enjoined.

Beloved, imitate the example of these Apostles! Whenever you feel that you have something to do that is beyond you, stop a moment and breathe a prayer for more strength. If ever the leap is too wide, draw back, take a breath, ask for strength and then, in the name of Him that will surely bear you over it, take your leap and succeed! He has not brought you into a condition in which you shall feel your infirmities so abjectly as to lie down and die, but He does intend you to feel your weakness so much that you may importunately pray for His aid and then, in the strength which you have gained by prayer, may attain to heights of virtue which otherwise had been far above and out of your sight. We are all the more likely to rise to holiness when we have seen our own incapacity for it.

Those who, at the first blush, were somewhat staggered by the high and glorious precepts of Christian forgiveness, of non-resistance and of returning good for evil, are, none the less, likely to become good practitioners of this holy art, but all the more so if their astonishment drives them to pray, Lord, increase our faith. Let us then, this morning, in that connection, consider the prayer of the text. Let us, secondly, see how it bears upon the duty of forgiveness, how the increase of faith can help us to forgive. And then, thirdly let us note how our Lord Jesus answered this prayer. O Divine Spirit, lead us into these Truths of God while we meditate together and afterwards help us to show in our lives the mind of Christ!

I. First, LET US CONSIDER THE PRAYER ITSELF. It may help us to see its meaning if we consider, for a moment, where the Apostles learned to pray like this. Who suggested to them to say, Lord, increase our faith? Now, faith is the act of mantruly, it is the gift of Godbut it is as surely the act of man. God does not believe for us, the Holy Spirit does not believe in our placethe man, himself, believes. This would be clear enough to the Apostles, but they might not so readily learn that Jesus had power to give and to increase faith.

It is assuredly most proper to ask the Lord to increase our faith, but it was not very early in their Christian career that the Apostles did so pray. In fact, it is a very singular fact that I think this is almost the only instance in which, as an Apostolic company, they asked any spiritual thing of the Master! They did say, Lord, teach us how to pray, but I am afraid they meant to learn a form of prayer rather than to be filled with the spirit of prayer. As to spiritual blessings, our Lord might well say to them, To this point you have asked nothing in My name. But they were, at last, so overwhelmed with a consciousness of their own weakness when they perceived the exceeding breadth and height of the Law of Christian forgiveness, that they felt assured that there must be strength laid up for them somewhere or other! And where could it be but in their Lord? And so they prayed to the Lord, increase our faith.

It is not the only time in which a sense of their own personal emptiness has convinced men of the Divine fullness and driven them to it. I think it was Jesus who had taught them to pray so. They must have caught the idea from that which is recorded in the 11th of Mark, at the 22nd verse, where you have much the same passage as the one before us, though expressed in different words. Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whoever shall say unto this mountain, Be you removed, and be you cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he said shall come to pass, he shall have whatever he said. Therefore I say unto you, What things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them. And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any: that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your trespasses.

Note that our Lord, according to Mark, commenced this exhortation concerning forgiveness by saying, Have faith in God, then showed the power of faith in working wonders, and especially in obtaining answers to prayer, and last of all commanded forgiveness of trespasses. Was not that sentence, Have faith in God, the mother of their prayer, Increase our faith? Jesus had said, Have faith, and now, when they fully understand what it is that He inculcates, they take the words out of His mouth and they say to their Lord, Add to our faith. We trust we have some of that precious Grace, but add to it yet more and more, we beseech You.

Our Master, in His teaching, was continually connecting the forgiveness of others with the exercise of faith. In the passage just referred to, and in that which surrounds my text, you have our Lord referring to the faith which moves mountains, or plucks up sycamore trees by the rootsand

coupling with it the forgiving of offenses. Surely this may have led them so to pray! Our Lord had also suggested this prayer for faith from the fact that as He had taught them that there must be faith in prayer, so He had also insisted upon it that prayer must always be connected with a forgiving spirit. In fact, in the model prayer, according to which we are always to shape our petitions, He has taught us to say, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, or, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

He has allowed us, as it were, to cut out for ourselves the measure of pardon that we wish to receiveand the measure is to be precisely that which we are prepared to give to others. God will pardon us in proportion as we are prepared to pardon! If you have a trespass which you cannot pardon, God also has an unpardonable sin written in His book against you. I mean unpardonable as long as you are unforgiving. If you will only pardon slowly, and after a niggardly fashion, you shall not, for many a day, enjoy the freeness and the bounty of the unlimited mercy of God! So you see, as our Lord had connected success in prayer both with forgiveness and faith, he had suggested the increase of the one with the view of accomplishing the other.

No man can pray successfully while he is in an unforgiving frame of mind. But a believing man always does pray successfully, therefore a believing man is ready to forgive. As faith increases we become more able to overlook the provocations we endure. I think that the Apostles had also learned this prayer, not only from the Master, but from one who was very much inferior to themselves, but who, nevertheless, had outrun them in the knowledge of the struggles of the heartI mean the father who had a lunatic child. That was a wonderful prayer of his, when Jesus said to him, If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes. The poor man cried out, Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief.

This was a deeply experimental prayer. It showed how familiar he was to the workings of his own soul. He detected unbelief in his own heart and yet he saw faith there, too, whereas a great many Christians, if they discern some unbelief in their hearts, straightway imagine that there cannot be any faith! And if they possess a degree of faith, they fancy that there cannot be any unbelief survivingwhereas the two powers are in one man at the same time and contend within his soul. The Apostles appear to me to have learned a noble lesson from that tried father and now they put his prayer into their own language and use it on their own account. They do as good as confess their lingering unbelief, and yet they acknowledge that they do believe while they pray, Lord, increase our faith. So that with the teaching of Jesus and with the example of that poor struggling soul, they had been taught to pray as they should. It is a grand thing when we learn to pray better. And both from the Masters lips and from the experience of all, His servants are being taught what to pray for as we ought. By the use of such means the Spirit helps our infirmity and teaches us how to prevail with God.

Now let us come a little closer to the prayer itself and notice what it confesses. It confesses that they had faith, for they say, Lord, increase our faith. He who asks for faith must have some faith, or he would not ask at all. Indeed, it is with faith that we ask for faith. He who pleads, Add to my faith, acknowledges that he has some, already, to which more is to be added. So that these Apostles, notwithstanding that they were staggered by the duty before them, believed that Christ could help them through it and believed, also, that He could at once give them the necessary faith. When you ask for any blessing, always do so in such a way as to acknowledge what you have already received. Do not despise the little faith you have, even though you feel bound to plead for more.

They also confessed that while they had faith they had not enough of it. My Brothers and Sisters, must we not all make the same confession? You believe in Jesus Christ to the salvation of your soul, but, Brothers and Sisters, do you believe to the comfort of your heart? You have faith enough to bear the ordinary trials of life, but, dear Brothers and Sisters, have you enough for the superior contests to which you have lately been called? If you have not, then here is the prayer for you, Lord, increase my faith. Certain it is that no one among us has too much faith, nor even enough should unusual storms arise. We have no faith to spare. God grants it to us always according to our day and He gives more Grace and faith when He sends more trials.

Often, when our faith is sorely tried, we are compelled to feel as mere babes in Faiths school and need, indeed, to pray daily, Lord, increase our faith. But then, by their prayer, the Apostles confessed that they could not increase their own faith. Faith is not a weed to grow upon every dunghill without care or cultureit is a plant of heavenly growth and requires Divine watching and watering! He who is the Author of faith and the Finisher of it, is the only One who can increase it. As no man ever obtains his first faith apart from the Spirit of God, so no man ever gets more faith except through the working of that same Divine power! The Spirit which rests upon Jesus must anoint us, also, or the measure of faith will not be enlarged.

Breathe, then, the prayer to God, my Brothers and Sisters, Increase my faith. This will be a far wiser course than to resolve in your own strength, I will believe more, for, perhaps, in rebuke of your pride you will fall into a decaying state and even believe less! After having made so vainglorious a resolution, you may fall into grievous despondency! Do not, therefore, say, I will accumulate more faith, but pray, Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief. Herein is your wisdom! The prayer, also, confesses that the Lord Jesus can increase faith. Dear Brethren, the Lord Jesus Christ can increase your faith by the use of common means, through His Spirit. He is able to make all Grace abound towards you! Not by any magical mode, nor by miracle, but even by such things as you have, the Lord can make Little-Faith grow into Greatheart and turn Feeble-Mind into Valiant-for-Truth!

He has the key of faith and can open more of its chambers and fill them with His treasures. He can reveal Truths of God to you which shall cause you to believe more fully, or the Truth of God already revealed, He can set

in clearer light and apply more powerfully to your heart and so can add to your faith. Do not believe, Brothers and Sisters, that you are condemned to lead an unbelieving life! No such necessity exists. Let no one among you sit down and say, I have a withered arm of faith and cannot stretch it out, or, I have a weak eye, and shall never be able to see afar off. No, the name of our God is, Jehovah Rophi, and He can heal us of all these ills! God can make you strong, Brothers and Sisters. Do you not know that He gives power to the faint and, to them that have no might, He increases strength?

Present again and again the prayer, Lord increase our faith, with the full conviction that He can do so to any extent and that He can lift even the most drooping soul among us into the full assurance of faith! May the Lord at this very hour work in you a childlike confidence in His love and faithfulness! And may you never be the victim of mistrust again! I want you to observe who prayed this prayer. It is not often that the Evangelists speak of, the Apostles, separately, as asking anything. You will perceive in the first verse that our Lord spoke to the disciples. Then said He to the disciples, but the persons who sought increased faith were the Apostles.

The Apostles said. How is this? Does it not show us that these men who were the leaders of the Christian Church did not think themselves infallible? Fancy the successor of Peter saying, Lord, increase our faith! Surely, His Holiness needs no increase of faith! He who boasts that he is infallible cannot be unbelieving! Ah, Brothers and Sisters, the Apostles knew nothing of such silly and wicked pretensions! None of them ever in their lives pretended to be the Head of the Church or, Vicar of Christ they were ready to cry to their Master for increase of faith just as soon as the rest of the disciples, yes, sooner, too, because they were the first to feel their need! They were the choice of the Lords flock and, therefore, they were the first to see and to confess their own failures!

No man so soon knows and so much deplores his need of faith as the man who has most of it! It was not the little ones in the Church who said, increase our faiththey might well say itbut it was the masters in Israel who had been best instructed by Christ! It was they who had seen His miracles and preached His Word! These were the very ones who cried to their Lord, Increase our faith. The nearer you live to God and the more full your soul is of faith, the less inclined will you be to be self-satisfied! And the more earnestly will you desire that your faith should be increased! It is somewhat remarkable that the whole of the Apostles thus prayed. They were unanimous in this prayer, though it did not often happen that they were so in anything else!

There were divisions among them and strifes as to who among them should be the greatest. But this time they were all one in the petition to the Lord. A petition which commended itself to the entire college of the Apostles is one which surely all of us may put up to our great Lord in the presence of that supreme duty of which we heard last Sunday morning. In order that we may not resist evil, but overcome evil with good, be pleased, O Lord, to increase our faith! While I am still explaining the prayer, let us notice, once again,

why they asked for faith. They said unto the Lord, increase our faith. Might they not more fitly have said, Lord, increase our meekness. Lord, increase our Christian love? No, but they went to the bottom of the thingthey looked to the mainspring of all Christian Gracesthey asked for faith.

Sometimes, Brothers and Sisters, we are led to see that if a duty is to be performed at all, it cannot be done in the strength of nature. Now the Grace which deals with the supernatural is faith, therefore we say, Lord, increase our faith, for since this is supernatural virtue which You do ask of us, be pleased to give us the faculty which deals with supernatural power that we may be enabled to achieve this high and difficult duty. I know some of you think that faith was given to men of old that they might work miracles and you have admired the faith of Samson when he slew the Philistines with the jawbone of an assthe faith which quenched the violence of fire, the faith which stopped the mouths of lionsand so on. Yes, but faith is meant for other matters besides miracles!

The faith which enables a Christian man to live a holy life, especially the faith that will enable you not to be overcome of evil but to overcome evil with good, and to forgive your neighbor to 70 times seven is as great a faith as that which of old stopped the sun and divided the sea! It seems to be thought by some that faith nowadays is only meant to be used to raise money so that we may support orphanages and colleges by obtaining answers to prayer. Well, these are noble deeds and the faith which accomplishes them brings great glory to God. May God give to His servants who are called to such work, more and more success, for such works are a standing testimony to a skeptical world that God does hear prayer!

But after all, the feats which the most of you are to perform are neither miracles nor the maintenance of orphanages, but deeds of love in common life! You have not to stop the mouths of lions, but you have the equally difficult task of stopping your own mouths when you are in an angry temper! You are not called to quench the violence of fire, except as it burns in your own wrath! You have to smite no Philistine but your own sins and cast down no walls but your own prejudices! Christian woman, your faith has to work its miracles in the drawing room, in the parlor, in the kitchen, in the chamber. Man of business, your faith is to perform its marvels on the exchange, or in the shop, or in the commercial room. Working man, you are to achieve your wonders at the forge, or by the bench, or in the field, or in the mill.

Here is your sphere of service and you have need to lift to Heaven the prayer of the ApostlesLord, increase our faith, that you may live worthily, righteously, soberly and after a Christian sort.

II. Secondly, I want to show HOW THE INCREASE OF FAITH BEARS UPON OUR POWER TO FORGIVE OTHERS. And I would answer first, that I think you already see that it does so, although you cannot explain the mode of its operation. If I were to bring before you a person of whom I might say, This man is strong in faith, you would feel certain that he would be a man who would readily forgive the injuries of others. Though you do not see the connection between the two, you are very conscious

that there must be such a connection.

Now, when I tell you of Abraham, how when the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot quarreled, Abraham did not quarrel with Lot, but, finding that they must separate, gave Lot, his junior, the choice as to which way he would go, it seems natural that Abraham should act in that gentle manner. That calm, quiet, believing man of Godyou have only to look into his majestic face and feel quite certain that he will act with great gentleness and nobleness of soul. Joseph, the man so full of faith that he gave commandment concerning his boneswhen his brothers came before him and he made himself known to them and wept over them and forgave themyou feel that such conduct is just what you might expect from Joseph! The very fact that he was so true a Believer in God makes you feel that he will not seek to avenge himself, though he had been shamefully treated by his unbrotherly brethren.

Moses was so meek, so gentle, that you trace his meekness at once to his faith. And David, when you see him standing over sleeping Saul and hear his companion say, Let me smite him but this once, but he will not allow the deed to be done, but leaves his enemy in the hands of God, you say to yourself, I expected such conduct of David, for he is a truly believing man of God. Though you have not satisfactorily traced out the connection between the two, yet you know very well that if a man professes to be a Believer in Christ you expect him to be gentle and forgivingand you are right! And there is an actual connection between the two, which we shall, I doubt not, see directly.

When the Apostles said, Lord, increase our faith, they meant, Increase our confidence in You. And this is a very material help towards the performance of the duty. First, God must help us so to believe in Jesus that we may not suspect Him of setting us an impracticable task. The Lord has said, Overcome evil with good, and has bid us Forgive 70 times seven times. Do you not feel ready to say, This is a hard saying, who can bear it? Do we not fancy that we shall never get through the world in that gentle fashion? It is our unbelief which tells us that we must sometimes bend our fists, or at least sometimes deliver our minds with great vigor of wrath or else we shall be trod down like mire in the streets.

We need to ask for Divine Grace that we may be helped to believe that Christs way of forgiveness is, after all, the best way, the noblest way, the most truly manly and the most surely happy way. Their prayer may be read as meaning Lord, help us to believe that You can enable us to do this. We cannot, by our own unaided nature, be always forgiving, lowly, gentle and loving in temper, but You have said, Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls. Therefore, O Lord, give us more faith in You that we may believe that You can make us meek and lowly, even as You are.

We ought to believe that Jesus can turn our lion-like tempers into lambs and our raven-like spirits into doves. And if we have not faith enough for that, we must pray for itfor do you not see that if a man believes a duty to be impossible, or judges that Grace, itself, cannot enable him to do it, then he never will do it? But when he obtains a confidence that the command is within his power, or that it can be obeyed by a force which is within his reach, then he has won half the battle! In believing in the possibility of a high standard of holiness, a man is already on his way towards that holiness! I therefore earnestly exhort you to ask for more faith, that you may believe the duty of constant forgiveness to be possible of accomplishment through Divine Grace.

But, next, between faith and forgiveness a very close connection will be seen if we enquire what is the foundation of faith? Listen a moment. Faith believes that God, for Christs sake, forgives usand how much? Seventy times seven? Beloved, God forgives us much more than that! And does the Lord forgive us seven times a day? If seven times a day we offend Him and repent, does He forgive? Yes, that He does. This is to be unfeignedly believed and I believe it! I believe that often as I transgress, God is more ready to forgive me than I am ready to offend, though, alas, I am all too ready to transgress.

Have you right thoughts of God, dear Hearer? If so, then you know that He is a tender Father willing to wipe the tear of penitence away and press His offending child to His bosom and kiss them with the kisses of His forgiving love. The mercy of God lies at the very foundation of our faithand surely it wonderfully helps us to forgive. Dont you see at once, O forgiven one, that the natural inference is that if the Lord has forgiven you your 10,000 talents of debt, you dare not go and take your brother by the throat for the hundred pence which he owes you! You must forgive him because God, for Christs sake, has forgiven you!

Notice again, that the joy of faith is a wonderful help to forgiveness. Do you remember when you were first converted? I remember well the first day in which I believed in Jesus Christ! Do you not, also, remember your own spiritual birthday? Recall, then, the love of your espousals, the happy honeymoon of your spiritual life! Could you forgive your enemy then? Why, you thought nothing of injuries! You were so happy and joyful in the Lord that if anybody tried to irritate you they could not do it! Or if you became a little annoyed for a minute, you soon came back to your moorings again. You were too full of holy joy to indulge in quarrelling. Dear Brothers and Sisters, do you not know that you ought always to have retained that love and joy, and that the best thing you can do is to get them back if you have lost them? Therefore, pray today, Lord, increase my faith, restore unto me once again the joy of Your salvation. When you return from your backsliding and rejoice in the Lord with all your heart, you will find it easy enough to forgive your meanest foe.

Again, it is quite certain that a spirit of rest is created by faith which greatly aids the gentle spirit. The man who believes, enters into rest and becomes calm of spirit. And this keeps him from seeking petty revenges. He knows that whatever happens, all is right forever. He knows whom he has believed and he walks in the integrity of his heart and, therefore, he is not a man that is likely to be irritated. It is wonderful when you are sure you are right with how much you can put up with! Good Joseph Hughes of Battersea was one of the founders of the Bible Society and one of the most earnest workers for it. He was riding on a coach upon a dreadfully

cold, bitter winters day and at his side sat a talkative person, who thought himself a gentleman.

As the coach proceeded, he began talking about religion in general, and denouncing Bible Societies in particular. With a sprinkling of swearing he went on to say that such societies were got up to keep lazy secretaries and other officials. Those fellows, he said, get fine salaries and then they go traveling all about the country, enjoying themselves, and charging a pretty penny for their traveling expenses. I understand they always travel in the best style. Mr. Hughes quietly replied, But what would you say, Sir, if you were informed by one of the secretaries that he never received a farthing for his services and that in order to save money for the Society, he rode on the top of the coach on a cold day like this so that he might not pay so much as he would have to do if he went inside? Now, Sir, said he, one of them is doing this before your eyes.

Now you can understand how Mr. Hughes could be very cool and allow the talkative man to proceed as long as he liked with his falsehoods, because he knew he had so crushing an answer for him! And so when faith gives perfect rest to the soul, a man is not easily disturbed, for he knows that behind all, there is a blessing which will compensate for present annoyances. Conscious strength removes us from the temptations which surround petty feebleness. May God give you that increased faith which shall fix your heart in the sphere of perfect satisfaction in the Lord and patient waiting for His will and so shall you cease to fret yourself because of evildoers.

Again, faith, when it is strong, has a high expectancy about it which helps it to bear with the assaults of men of the world. What, she says, what matters that which happens to me here, for I am on my journey, and I shall soon be in the Glory Land, where I shall have a reward for all my travail by being forever with the Lord. A man readily puts up with the little inconvenience of the present when he has great joys in store for the future! If you stay at an inn for a while when you are on a journey, it is only for a night, and though things may not be very comfortable, you say, Well, I am not going to live here a week, I shall be gone in the morning. It does not matter, I am looking forward to my sweet home at my journeys end.

So does Faith, by its blessed expectation of the future, make the troubles of the present to be very light so that she bears them without fretfulness and anger. May the Holy Spirit cause Faith thus to work in us.

III. But my time has gone sooner than I desired and, therefore, I must close by noticing, in the third place, HOW THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ANSWERED THE PRAYER FOR INCREASED FAITH. He did it in two ways. First, by assuring them that faith can do anything. The Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say unto this sycamore tree, be you plucked up by the root and be you planted in the sea, and it should obey you. I think He meant that to be understood as a proverbial expression, to signify that faith can accomplish anything.

You say, Ah, my bad temper is rooted in me: as a sycamore tree takes hold of the earth by its roots, so an ill temper has gone into the very depth of my nature. I am constitutionally quick-tempered. From my very birth I have found it hard to forgive. If you have faith, my Brother, you can say to that sycamore tree, or better still, upas tree within you, Be you plucked up by the roots. But, says one, With such a nature as mine, such a changeable, excitable, nervous disposition as mine, you cannot expect to plant in me the tree which bears the fruit of calm, quiet forgiveness. What says our Lord? You shall say to that sycamore tree, be you planted in the sea.

A strange place for a tree to be planted! In the sea! Indeed, it is an impossible thing, because every wave would shake its roots out of their places! The substance is too unsubstantial, the liquid of the sea is too moveable for a single tree to grow in it! Our Lord says, If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed it should obey you. You can, by faith, plant a tree in the seaand so can you plant this fruit-bearing glorious tree of love to God and love to man within your frail nature if you have but faith enough! Brothers and Sisters, we do not need to be moving mountains! If mountains required moving, I have no doubt faith would move them, but the mountains are in the best possible places they can be and, therefore, why should we uproot them?

We do not require to transplant sycamore trees by faith, for there are plenty of workmen to be had to lift them up and carry them carefully to another place. And it would be a pity that we should use faith so as to deprive poor men of their means of livelihood! But I doubt not it would be done if it were necessary. Now, there is room enough in the moral and spiritual world for Faith and there she can work her miracles! We can say to our bad disposition, Be plucked up by the roots, and it will be done! And if we have faith in God, we can have the right disposition, the quiet, calm spirit implanted in us. Do you believe this? If you do not, then you have not the faith and you shall not see it! But, if you believe, it is possible to you.

Once more, how did Christ answer the prayer? He answered it in a very remarkable manner, as I think, by teaching them humility. He said to them in effect, You think that if you were to forgive to 70 times seven you would be doing a great deal. You fancy that if you were never to return evil for evil, but always to be gentle and loving, you would be somebody and that God would almost be in debt to you! But it is not so. And then He went on to tell them that the servant, when he is sent to plow or to attend to the cattle is not thanked. While he is doing his labor his master does not come to him and wonder at him as if he were doing some very extraordinary thing.

The master does not hold up his hands in amazement and cry, How well my servant can plow, how cleverly he feeds the oxen, and he does not go to him and say, My dear, invaluable Servant, I am sure I do not know what I would do without you, therefore come and sit down, and I will wait upon you. Oh, no, if he works well, he only does his own work and nobody elses. He does what he is bound to do and the master does not think of praising him and feasting him. So says Christ, So likewise

you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

This mode of increasing our faith reminds me of the hydropath way of strengthening some people by pouring a douche of cold water upon the spine of their backs. The parable of the servant and his lord shows us our true place and the small value which we may attach to our own services. It takes the man who thinks, Oh, it is a great thing to forgive everybody, and if I were to do it I should be a great saint, and it pours a torrent of cold water upon his pride by saying, No, if you did it you would not be anything wonderfulit is only what is your duty to doyou would have no reason to go about the world blowing your trumpet and saying, What a wonderful martyr I am. You would only then have fulfilled a common duty.

Well now, it seems to me that this is a wonderful strengthener to my faith. I feel resolved within my spirit thusMy Lord and Master, I will no more say of anything You bid me to do, this is beyond my reach, but I will pray, My Lord, increase my faith till I can do it, till I can live up to Your standard, for even if I should do so, by Your Grace, yet considering what You have done for me, considering what I owe You, considering the power of Your blessed Spirit that dwells within me, considering the richness of the ultimate reward which You will surely give me, though it is of Grace and not of debt, all I could do, if I could be zealous as a seraph and perfect as the saints in Heaven, would be too little, and I should have to confess that I am an unprofitable servant! I should have done no more than it was my duty to have done.

I pray God the Holy Spirit to let this sermon come on the back of the discourse of last Sunday, that you may not look upon the first as being impracticable, but may gather strength from the second to go and put into practice what you have learned. May God bless you for Christs sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Matthew 18:19-35; Luke 17:1-10.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK173, 626, 533.

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THE NECESSITY OF INCREASED FAITH   
NO. 32

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 1, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL.

**And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. Luke 17:5**

VERILY if the Apostles said this, one and all of us had need take up the prayer. If the twelve mightiest in the army of the Lord of Hosts had need of such a supplication, what shall we say who are but the interior soldiersthe feeblest saints? If you hope to win the day, does it not well become us to pray, Increase our faith?

It is a matter of dispute as to the occasion when these words were uttered. Some think that we must look at the connection of the Chapter for the explanation. Jesus Christ had been teaching His disciples that if their brother should trespass against them seven times a day and seven times a day turned again to them saying, I repent, they were to forgive him. Some say that constrained the Apostles to say, increase our faith. They conceived it to be so hard a duty to incessantly pardon and constantly to forgive, that they felt unable to accomplish it without a large increase of faith. Others thinkvery possibly with greater truththat the prayer was offered when the Apostles endeavored to cast out the evil spirits from the poor demoniac and failed in the attempt. And they said to Jesus, why could not we cast him out? And He said, verily, if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say unto this sycamore tree, be you plucked up by the root and be you planted in the sea and it would obey you. Then they said to the Lord, Increase our faith. However, whatever the occasion in this particular instance, we shall always find good enough occasion for presenting the prayerand I know not but this morning may be a season when each of us may have special necessity to put it up to God, Increase our faith. Proceeding at once to the subject, the first thing we shall consider is

the object of their solicitude. It was their faith. Secondly, the desire of their heartsIncrease our faith. And then, thirdly the Person on whom they trusted to strengthen their faithThey said to the Lord, increase our faith.

I. First, then, THE OBJECT OF THEIR SOLICITUDE WAS THEIR FAITH. Faith is of the utmost importance to a Christian. There is nothing of which we should have a greater and a more earnest concern than our faith. I shall endeavor to show you this from seven or eight reasons and may God press them to your hearts and send them so home that everyone of us may become deeply anxious as to whether we have a real vital faith which unites us to the Lamb and brings salvation to our souls.

1. We ought, my Friends, to be extremely careful of our faithboth of its rightness and of its strength First of allwhen we consider the position which faith occupied in salvation. Faith is the salvation Grace. We are not saved by love. But we are saved by Grace and we are saved by faith. We are not saved by courage, we are not saved by patience. We are saved by faith. That is to say, God gives His salvation to faith and not to any other virtue. It is nowhere writtenhe that loves shall be saved. It is nowhere recorded that a patient sinner shall be saved. But it is said, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Faith is the vital part of salvation. If a man lacks faith, he lacks everything. Without faith it is impossible to please God. If a man has true faithhowever little he has of any other virtuethat man is secure. But supposing it possible for a man to possess every virtue in the world. Let him be as much a Christian in his exterior as the Apostle Paul, himself. Let him be as earnest as a seraph. Let him be as diligent in the service of his Master as you could conceive even an angel on high to be, still, without faithand Gods Word declaresit is impossible to please God. Faith is the saving Graceit is the connecting link between the soul and Christ. Take that away and all is gone. Remove faith, you have sawn through the ships keel and she must sink. Take away faith, you have taken away my shield and I must be slain. Remove faith and Christian life becomes a nonentityit is extinct at once, for, the just shall live by faithand without faith how could they live at all? Consider then, that since faith is so important in salvation, it becomes each of us more earnestly to inquire whether we have faith or not. O, my Brothers and Sisters, there are a thousand shams in the worlda thousand imitations of faith. But there is only one true vital saving faith. There are scores of notional faithsa faith which consists in holding a sound creed, a faith which bids men believe a lie by wrapping them up with assurances of their safety when they are still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. There is a faith which consists in presumptuously trusting to ourselves. There are scores of false faithsbut there is only one true one. Oh, As you wish to be saved at lastas you would not be self-deceived and go marching to damnation with your eyes shuttake your faith in your hands this morning and see whether it is genuine sterling coin! We ought to be more careful of our faith than of anything else. True, we ought to examine our conduct, we ought to search our works, we ought to try our love, but, above all, our faithfor if faith is wrong, all is wrong. If faith is right, we may take that as the touchstone of our sincerity. He that believes on the Son of God has eternal life abiding in him.

2. SecondlyBe anxious about your faith, for all your Graces hang upon it. Faith is the root Graceall other virtues and Graces spring from it. Tell me of lovehow can I love Him in whom I do not believe? If I do not believe that there is a God and that He is the Rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him, how can I possibly love Him? Tell me of patiencehow can I exercise patience unless I have faith? Faith looks to the recompense of the rewardshe says that all things are working together for our good. She believes that from our distresses the greater glory shall spring and therefore she can endure. Tell me of couragebut who can have courage if he has not faith? Take what virtue you will and you will see that it depends on faith. Faith is the silver thread upon which the pearls of the Graces are to be strung. Break that and you have broken the stringthe pearls lie scattered on the ground. Nor can you wear them for your own adornment. Faith is the mother of virtues. Faith is the fire which consumes the sacrifice. Faith is the water which nurtures the root. Faith is the sap which imparts vitality to all the branches. If you have not faith, all your Graces must die. And in proportion as your faith increases so will all your virtues, not all in the same proportion, but all in some degree. The man of little faith is the man of little love. The man of great faith is the man of great affection. He that has great faith in God could give himself to die for God. He who has little faith in Him would shrink at the stake because his love would be feeble. Have care of your faith, for on that your virtue depends. And if you would cultivate things that are goodly, things that are lovely, things that are of good repute, things that are honorable to yourself and pleasing to God, guard well your faith, for on your faith all things must rest.

3. ThirdlyTake heed of your faith, because Christ thinks much of it. There are three things in the New Testament which are called precious. One of them you knowthe precious blood of Christ. Another is the exceedingly great and precious promises. And faith has the honor of being the third thingTo them that have obtained like precious faith. So that faith is one of Gods three precious things. It is one of the things which He values above all others. I was astonished yesterday when I met with an idea of an old Divine concerning the honor which God puts on faith says he, Christ takes the crown off His own head to put it on Faiths head. Mark you how often our Lord says, your faith has saved you. Now it is not faith that savesit is Christ that saves. Your faith has healed you, says Christ. Now faith did not heal, it was Christ that healed, but Christ did uncrown Himself to crown Faith. He took the royal diadem of salvation from His own head and placed it on the brow of Faith and therein He made Faith the King of kingsfor it wears the crown which the King of kings, alone, can wearthe crown of salvation. Do you not know that we read, We are justified by faith. Now, in one sense this is not the fact, for the matter of justification is the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are justified by Christ, but Christ arrays faith in His own royal garments and renders it truly illustrious. Jesus Christ always puts faith in the seat of honor. When that poor woman came whose daughter was ill, He said, O woman, great is your faith! He might have said, Woman, great is your love, for it was great love that made her force her way through the crowd and speak on her daughters behalf. Or, Great is your patience, for when He called her, dog, she still stuck to Him and would not depart. He might have said, Great is your courage. For she said, Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs. Or, He might have said, Great is your wisdom. For she was a wise woman to extract sweets out of the bitters and to say, Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs. But He overlooks all that and says, Great is your faith. Well, if Christ thinks so much of faith, ought we not to esteem it most highly? Is it possible to think too highly of that jewel which Christ reckons to be the most valuable? If He sets faith in the forefront of the forehead of virtue and if He regards it as the choicest gem in the crown of the Christian, will it not awaken us to see whether we have it or not? For if we have it, we are richrich in faith and promises. But if we possess it not, whatever we have, we are poorpoor in this world and poor in the next.

4. Next, Christian, take good care of your faith, for remember, faith is the only way whereby you can obtain blessings. If we want blessings from God, nothing can fetch them down except faith. Prayer cannot draw down answers from Gods Throne except it is the earnest prayer of the man who believes. Faith is the ladder on which my soul must walk to ascend to Heaven. If I break that ladder, how can I ever approach my God? Faith is the angelic messenger between the soul and Heaven. Let that angel be withdrawn, I can neither send prayer up nor receive the answers down. Faith is the telegraphic wire which links earth and Heaven on which Gods blessings move so fast that before we call, He answers and while we are yet speaking He hears us! But if that telegraphic wire of faith is snapped, how can we receive the promise? Am I in trouble? I can obtain help for trouble by faith. Am I beaten about by the enemy? My soul on that dear Refuge leans by faith. But, take faith awayin vain I call on God. There is no road between my soul and Heaven. In the deepest winter, faith is a road on which the horses of prayer may travelyes, and all the better for the biting frost! But blockade the road and how can we communicate with our great King? Faith links me with Divinity. Faith clothes me with the robes of Deity. Faith engages on my side the omnipotence of Jehovah. Faith gives me the might of God, for it ensures that power on my behalf. It gives me courage to defy the hosts of Hell. It makes me march triumphant over the necks of my enemies. But without faith how can I receive anything of the Lord? Let not him that wavers who is like a wave of the seaexpect that he will receive anything of God! O then, Christians, watch well your faith! For with it you can win all things, however poor you arebut without it you can obtain nothing. It is said of Midas, that he had the power to turn everything into gold by the touch of his hand. And it is true of faithit can turn everything into gold. But destroy faith, we have lost our all. We are miserably poor, because we can hold no fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

5. Next, my Friends, take care of your faith perpetually, because of your enemies. For if you do not need faith when you are with friends, you will require it when you have to deal with your foes. That good old warrior, Paul, once led the Ephesians into the armory and after he had shown them the shoes they were to wear, the belt, the breastplate, the helmet and the sword, he solemnly said, Above all take the shield of faith. Even if you forget the helmet, be quite sure of the shield, for if your helmet should be off, you may ward off a blow with the shield and save it from your head. You had better put on the shoes of peace and the breastplate of righteousness, but if you omit one of them, take care that you have the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One. Well, now, faith makes a man very mighty when he deals with enemies. If a man believes he is right, only taking it in a natural point of viewbring that man before princes and kings, for the sake of Truth, how lion-like will he be! He will say, I cannot yield, I must not, for I have the Truth on my side. Yes, though others may style it dogged obstinacy, it is a true nobility of soul which bids a man declare, I will not yield. Much more strong is true spiritual faith. It has taken the martyr to the stake and enabled him to sing when the flames have girdled him. It has led another to the sea. And like he of whom we read in the old martyrologies, it has helped even the aged matron to cry, Christ is all yet! Faith has quenched the violence of the flames, shut the mouth of lions and out of weakness it has made us strong. It has overcome more enemies than the whole host of conquerors. Tell me not of the victories of Wellington. Mention not the battles of Napoleon. Tell me of what FAITH has done! Oh, if we should erect a monument to the honor of faith, what various names should we carve upon the mighty pedestal! We should inscribe, here The lions den. There, The battle of the leopards. Here we should have recorded how faith divided the Red Sea. And there, how faith smote the Midianites. And there, how Jael slew Sisera by faith. What conflicts of faith should we have to engrave? O, Faith! Your banner high shall wave! Your escutcheon is most glorious! Great are you and full of victories! With you, O Faith, I cast the gauntlet to the world, secure of victory. Give me a child to fight with and without faithlike poor Peter before the little maid, I should tremble and deny my Master. But that same Peter, with faith, fears not to stand before a frowning Sanhedrimto speak of his Master amid the scoffing of the high priests!

Mary, Queen of Scots, said she was, more afraid of John Knoxs prayers and faith than she was of an army of ten thousand men. And a sensible enemy may well tremble when such invincibles are at war with him. I should not like to have a man of faith opposing me. Tell me the world hates me and I will rejoice at it. But tell me that a man of faith has determined to crush me and I have need to tremblefor there is a potency in that mans armhis blows strike hard. And when he does smite, he smites home, as with a rod of iron. Tremble, foes of God, for faith must overcome. And O you servants of the living God, guard well your faith, for by this shall you be victorious. And you shall stand like rocks, unmoved amid the storms, unshaken by the tempests of persecution.  
6. And now for a sixth reason. Take care of your faith, because otherwise you cannot well perform your duty. Faith is the foot of the soul by which it can march along the road of the commandments. Love can make the feet move more swiftly. But faith is the foot which carries the soul. Faith is the oil enabling the wheels of holy devotion and of earnest piety to move well. Without faith the wheels are taken from the chariot and we drag along heavily. With faith I can do all things. Without faith I shall neither have the inclination nor the power to do anything in the service of God. If you would find the men who serve God the best, you will find them the men of the most faith. Little faith will save a man, but little faith cannot do great things. Poor Little Faith could not have fought Apollyon. No, it needed Christian to do that. Poor Little-Faith could not have slain Giant Despair. It required Great-Hearts arm to knock that monster down. Little-Faith can get to Heaven very surely but it often has to run and hide itself in a nutshell and to lose all but its jewels. If there are great battles and great works to do, there must be great faith! Assurance can carry mountains on its backLittle-Faith stumbles at a molehill. Great-Faith, like Behemoth, can snuff up Jordan at a draughtLittle-Faith is drowned in a drop of rain. Little-Faith begins to think of going back at the slightest trouble. Great-Faith can build temples. She can pile castles. She can preach the Gospel. She can proclaim Christs name before enemies. She can do all things. And if you would be great, indeed, and serve your Master much, as I trust you will, you will seek increased faith! By so doing you will be more diligent in duty. O, you active Christians, be full of faith! You busy Christians, be sure to guard it! For once let that fall, what will you do? As Sunday school teachers, as preachers, as visitors of the sick, or whatever you have to do, rest assured that faith must be your strength and confidence. If that fails, where are you then?

Againtake care of your faith. For only faith can comfort you in your troubles. Yes, say some, this is about all we think of, the uses of faith to console us in our troubles. Now I never like to laugh at Gods people because they desire comfort. I believe that it is a very great proof that they are childrenthat they like sweet things. If they did not, I should fear they were not Gods children at all. But I hear ministers saying, Ah, you are always saying you need comfort, you need comfort. Yes, to be sure, I say, they do. And they need it because they never get it from you, Sir! I believe Gods people do need comfort, though, it is true, they want too much of it when they ought not to have it. But they require a promise very often and they ought to have it. Now faith is the best cordial to the soul. O, how faith will realize a promise at a time when there is great trouble coming! Ah! says faith, God says, As your days so shall your strength be. Ah! says faith, it is a rough road. The thorns are sharp. The flints are strewn about it, but then, your shoes shall be iron and brass. And faith looks at the strong old shoes and says, I will even venture, and off she goes. Little-Faith sits murmuring in a corner Great-Faith is singing in the fire. They shall praise Him aloud in their beds, they shall sing His high praise in the fire. Little-Faith stands desponding, mingling her tears with the flood. Great-Faith says, When you pass through the river, I will be with you, the flood shall not overflow you. When you pass through the fire, you shall not be burnedneither shall the flames kindle upon you. Would you be comfortable and happy? Would you enjoy religion? Would you have the religion of cheerfulness and not that of gloom? Then seek more faith. You will be saved with ever so little faith but you will not be saved happily. You will be happy hereafter if you believe in the slightest degree. But you will not be happy here unless you fully, habitually and earnestly believebelieve strongly in the faithful promises of Jehovah, in all the glorious dignity of His Person and in all the faithfulness and immutability of His Grace. If you would be Christian larks and not Christian owls, seek to have more faith. If you love darkness and would fly about in it in gloom and misery, then be content with little faith. But if you would mount in sunshine and carol like the bird of day, then seek strong confidence!

One more reason. Take care of your faith, my Friends, for it is very often so weak that it demands all your attention. I do not know whether any of you feel that your faith is too strong. I never feel mine strong enough. It seems to be exactly strong enough to bear the days troubles, but it would not stand cutting in the least degree with the plane. I could not afford to take the least atom off. It is just enough and no more. As for some of us, our faith is so weak that the least trouble threatens to devour it. The goat passes and nips its tender shoot, the winter chills and freezes itit is almost ready to die. And my faith very often hangs upon the feeblest thread. It appears ready to expire. Take care of your faith, Christian, take care of your faith! Whatever you leave outside at night, do not leave that little child of faith. Whatever plant is exposed to the frost, be sure to put faith inside. Take care of faith, for it is generally so weak it needs well to have a good preservation.

Thus have I tried, as well as I can, this morning, to set forth the great necessity of looking to our faith. And our prayer must be, as it was that of the Apostles, increase our faith.

II. This brings us, secondly, to consider THE HEARTS DESIRE OF THE APOSTLES. Increase our faith. They did not say, Lord keep our faith aliveLord sustain it as it is at present, but, Increase our faith. For they knew very well that it is only by increase that the Christian keeps alive at all. Napoleon once said, I must fight battles and I must win themconquest has made me what I am and conquest must maintain me. And it is so with the Christian. It is not yesterdays battle that will save me today. I must be going onwards. A wheel will remain erect as long as it moves, but when it begins to stand still, it falls. Christian men are saved by progressconstantly going onwards keeps the Christian alive. If it were possible for me to stop, I know not where my life would be. The Christian must be going onward. For the arrow will mount while still it is in progress, but it stalls the moment the power stops that keeps it aloft. So the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

FirstIncrease our faith, in its extent. The extent of what it will receive. Usually, when we commence the Christian life, faith does not grasp muchit only believes a few elementary Doctrines. I find that many young converts have not gone much farther than believing that Jesus Christ died for sinners. By-and-by they get a little advanced and believe Election. But there is very little beyond that they receiveand it is not until many years that they believe the entire Gospel. Some of you, my Hearers, and a great many that are not my hearers are miserable little cramped soulsyou have learned a cast-iron creed and you will never move out of it. A certain somebody drew up five or six doctrines and said, There are the doctrines of the Bible, and you believe these. But you do not want to have your faith increasedfor you do not believe a great deal more that is in the Bible. I do not think I differ from any of my hyperCalvinistic Brothers and Sisters in what I do believe, but I differ from them in what they do not believe. I do not believe any less than they do but I believe a little more. I think, as we grow, we shall have our belief increased. Not only are there a few cardinal Doctrines that will be enough to steer our ship by, north, south, east, or west, but we shall begin to learn something about the north-west and north-east and that which lies between the four points! Many people, when they hear something a little contrary to what they have usually heard, say at once, That is not sound. But who made you a judge of what is sound? And there are some little souls who set themselves up for princes in Israel and think every man must believe as they believe, or else he is decidedly wrong. And they will hold no Christian communication or fellowship with him. I am sure I may pray to the Lord for themIncrease their faith! Help them to believe a little more. Help them to believe there may be Christian Wesleyansthat there are good Church people. And not only that Particular Baptists are very good sort of people but that there are some of Gods elect everywhere. I am sure I pray for all bigots, that they may have a little wider heart. I should like to stretch their hearts a little. But, no, they have reached the ultima thule, they have come to the last of the fortunate islands, there cannot be any shore beyond. It is dangerous for a mariner to spread his sails on untried seas. Up to now, says pious Crispand therefore, many fancy, up to now shall you go and no further. Dr. Gill declares just so much and who shall venture to say more. Or perhaps Calvin is made the standard and what business has any man to think a single thought beyond Calvin? Blessed be God, we have gone a little beyond that. And we can say, Increase our faith. With all our admiration for these great standard Divines, we are not prepared to shut ourselves up in their little iron cages. We say, Open the door and let me flylet me still feel that I am at liberty. Increase my faith and help me to believe a little more. I know I can say I have had an increase of faith in one or two respects within the last few months. I could not, for a long time, see anything like the Millennium in the Scriptures. I could not much rejoice in the Second Coming of Christ, though I did believe it. But gradually my faith began to open to that subject and I find it now a part of my meat and drink, to be looking for, as well as hastening unto, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! I believe I have only just begun to learn the A B Cs of the Scriptures and will constantly cry to the Lord, Increase my faith, that I may know more and believe more and understand Your Word far better. Increase my faith, in its extent.

Next, Increase my faith, in its intensity. Faith needs to be increased in its power, as well as in its extent. We do not wish to act as some do with a river, when they break the banks to let it spread over the pasture and so make it shallower. We wish, while it increases in surface, that it may increase likewise in its depth. Increase the intensity of our faith! Faith at first takes Gods mercy with an open palmas it increases, it holds it with her fingers and not more firmly. But when faith grows strong, ah, she takes it, as with an iron vice and grasps itand death nor Hell could rend a promise from faiths hand when faith is strong. The young Christian at first is not constant in his faitha little wind comes and he shakes. When he gets to be an old Christian it will take old Boreas, with 50 of his winds, to move him. Do you not feel, my dear Friends, that you need faith to be increased in its intensity? Would you not sing with Watts

*Oh, that I had a stronger faith,   
To look within the veil;   
To credit what my Savior says,   
Whose word can never fail?*

Your poor little faith cannot see many yards before it, for there are clouds of darkness all around. But strong faith can climb the hill that is called, Clear, and from the top thereof can see the Celestial City and the land that is very far off! Oh, may God increase your faith to such a degree that you may often have visions of Heaventhat you may sweetly sing, as Moses might have done at the top of Pisgah

*Oh, the transporting rapturous scene   
That rises to my sight!   
Sweet fields arrayed in living green,   
And rivers of delight!*

I pray God that you may climb up there, bathe your eyes in splendor, plunge your soul in rivers of bliss and be thoroughly transported and carried away by visions of that state of beatitude which shortly shall be yours. Beloved, let me exhort you to cry to the Lord, Increase my faith in its power of realizing Heaven and in every other way.

III. I have no time to dwell upon this, but must close up by very briefly mentioning THE PERSON TO WHOM THE APOSTLES ADDRESSED THEIR PRAYER. The Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith! They went to the right Person. They did not say to themselves, I will increase my faiththey did not cry to the minister, Preach a comforting sermon and increase my faith. They did not say, I will read such-and-such a book and that will increase my faith. No, they said to the Lord, Increase our faith. Faiths Author can alone increase it! I could inflate your faith till it turned into presumption but I could not make it grow. It is Gods work to feed faith, as well as to give it life at first. And if any of you desire to have a growing faith, go and take your burden this morning to Gods Throne, crying Lord, increase our faith! If you feel that your troubles have been increased, go to the Lord and say, Increase our faith! If your money is accumulating, go to the Lord and say, Increase our faithfor you will need more faith as you get more prosperity. If your property is diminishing, go to Him and say, Increase our faith, so that what you lose in one scale, you may gain in the other. Are you sickly and full of pain this morning? Go to your Master and say, Increase my faith, so that you may not be impatient, but be able to bear it well. Are you tired and weary? Go and supplicate, Increase our faith! Have you little faith? Take it to God and He will turn it into great faith. There is no hothouse for growing tender plants like a house that is within the curtainsthe tabernacle of Godwhere the Shekinah dwells.

I have been speaking in very great pain. But I would, if possible, close by asking you who are Christians whether you do not think this prayer very necessary to your own state. Let each one ask himselfDo not I need more faith? My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, rest assured, you will never get too much of this precious Grace. If you pay all the way to Heaven, you will never have a penny to spare when you get to Heavens Gate. If you live on faith all your journey through, you will not have a pot of manna left. Pray, then, for an increase of faith. You need this Church to stand, do you not? It can stand only in proportion as you are men and women of faith! I know I might exhort you to be men and women of prayer. But faith is the foundation stoneprayer comes next. Prayer without faith would be an empty mockery. It would win nothing of God. Do you want us to stand? Do you know how the world speaks of ushow the enthusiasm of the ranting people of Park Street are talked of? How is it to be kept up, except through your faith? How shall your ministers hands be held up, except by your faith and your prayers? Let faith be the Aaron! Let prayer be the Ur! And faith and prayer can hold up the hands of Moses, while the army below is fighting the enemy. Would you be kept from falling? You must be strong in faith. Little faith falls, strong faith stands. Would you win the day and reign in Heaven with a starry crown more brilliant than you might otherwise expect? Then be you increased in faith! And would you honor God much and enter Heaven, after having fought a good fight and won a crown? Then I will offer the supplication, increase the faith of my people, and put up the prayer, increase my faith.

But there are some of you, dear Friends, who could not use this petition and dare not. What would it avail you if you did so? Seeing you have no faith, how could that be increased which has no existence? Rather, your first need is the possession of the simple germs of faith. Oh, my Hearers, I marvel what some of you do without the comforts which faith can alone afford! Some of you are very poor peoplehow do you manage to endure your toils and troubles without faith? Where is your comfort? I do not wonder at your going to get drunk, or rioting in the ale-house, if you have no other comfort in this world. When I have penetrated some of our back streets and seen the poverty of the people, I have thought, If these people have no religion, what have these to comfort them? They are not like the rich man, who can indulge himself in every waywhat have they got in this world worth living for? I suppose they have some kind of happinesswhat sort of a thing it is I cannot tellit is to me a source of continual inquiry. And you rich men, what will you do without faith? You know that you must leave all your property behind yousurely this will make the idea of death dreadful to you. I cannot understand even your happiness, if you have any. I know this

*I would not change my blest estate   
For all the earth calls good or great.   
And while my faith can keep her hold,   
I envy not the sinners gold.*

But I want to ask you, what would you do in the next world without faith? Remember, you are standing now upon the edge of the vast gulf of an unknown future. Your soul stands quivering on the verge of the dark abysseach time your pulse beats, your soul is brought nearer to eternity. Faith gives wings to the soul. But what will you do without wings? There is a narrow gulf dividing earth from Heaven. The Christian flaps his wings and, borne upon them, he flies to Heaven. But what will you do without wings? It will be a leapa leap into the pit of Hell, to sink forever, without the power of ever recovering yourself. If a Christian could sink on his journey to Heaven, he would not sink far, for he would flap his wings and be up again! But there you will be, perpetually descending through that pit of Hell that has no bottomstruggling to rise, but you cannot, for you have no wings. Once moreoh, Unbeliever, what will you do without faith? For faith gives eyes to the soul. Faith gives us to see things that are not seenit is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The Christian, when he dies, will enter the land of death with his eyes openby means of which, goodly hosts of angels shall cheer his vision. But you must die a blind and eyeless spirit. Unhappy is the lot of the blind in this present world, but how infinitely deplorable that eternal blindness which shall prevent a sight of the splendors of Paradise and shut out forever even the feeblest ray of joy or hope!

And, once morefaith is the hand of the soul. The Christian, when he dies, catches hold of Christs garment and Christ bears him into Heaven. A bright angel descendsI clasp that angeland on his wings he wafts me up to bliss. But when the unbeliever dies, the angel would have a useless errand, for he has no hands. Suppose, O Sinner, Christ is there, but you cannot even touch His garments, for you have no hands to do it with! What will you do in the next world without hands? Do you think God will suffer such deformed souls in Heaven, without hands and without eyes? No, not at all. But how could you get in without hands? You could not open the gates of Heaven. What would you do? You would call on God for mercyand if the mercy were held out to you, you have not hands with which to lay hold upon it! I do not understand how some of you are happy without religion. I do not know what you mean to do if you die without faith. Go home and think of what you will do if you die without religionwhether you intend to brazen it out before the face of the Eternalor tamely to submit. Sinner! You cannot enter into Heaven without faith, but what have you made up your mind to do? Do you intend to tear down the gates of Heaven? Do you think you have omnipotence enough to force your way through squadrons of cherubim and legions of angels and so to enter by force? Or what do you design to do? Do you intend to quietly lie down in beds of sulfur? Do you design to be willingly tossed perpetually in that brimstone lake where there is no bottomwhere briny tears forever fall?

Will you do that? Will you make your bed in Hell? Sirs, are you so besotted that you are content with such an eternal doom? Is your reason clean gone? Are your senses so benighted that you can thus cast yourselves away? Surely you have resolved to do something! What, then, will you do? Do you fancy that without faith you will enter Heaven, when it is written, Without faith it is impossible to please God? And when God has said, He that believes not shall be damned, do you think you can reverse the decree? Will you mount the Throne of Jehovah and forswear Jehovah, Himself? Will you change His mandate and admit the Unbeliever into Heaven? No, you cannot! Tremble, then, Unbeliever, tremble! For there awaits you nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. What will you do in the swellings of Jordan without faith to keep your heads above the waters? God give faith to those that have none! And as for others, may He increase their faith!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3384 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GROWTH IN FAITH   
NO. 3384

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H, SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 12, 1867.

**The Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. Luke 17:5.**

THE Apostles said this. I have sometimes thought that Pauls speech at Lystra, when he forbade the multitude to worship him and told the people that he was a man of like passions with themselves, has need to be repeated in the ears of many modern Christians, for there is a tendency in the Christian Church to set up the Apostles and other eminent saints upon a platform high above the level of ordinary humanity! I do not say to worship them, but rather to hold them in extraordinary esteem than to regard them as models for imitation. Brothers and Sisters, our Lord Jesus Christ would have us to know that we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He would have us be certain that He, Himself, was tempted in all points like as we are. With equal certainty would He have us to know that the chosen twelve, the leaders of His host, who went forth from Him, were men of like passions with ourselves. We are not to look upon them as though they were unapproachable heroes, a sort of Divine character, or as though they were free from our infirmities and our troubles. They were as we are and if they excelled us it was by Divine strength, alone, by strength which we also may receiveby Grace which is as free to us as it was to them. If they were here, they would still have to struggle with unbelief and, conscious of their unbelief, would say again, Lord, increase our faith.

The Apostles said it and the Apostles said it to Jesus. They went to the Strong for strength! It is idle to go elsewhere. In vain would they have said it to one another. In vain would they have searched the whole world to find some eminent saint to whom to address the petition! They would have been like those foolish virgins who said to the wise, Give us of your oil, and they would have had the same answer, Not so, lest there be not enough for you and for us. The virgins went to those that sold and bought for themselves. The Apostles went to Christ, the Lawgiver, the Author and Finisher of their faith and, lifting up their hearts to Him in the prayer, Lord, increase our faith, they, before long, gained a comfortable answer and became strong in faith, giving glory to God!

Now, I shall need your attention at this time to five or six observations about faith as a growing thing. The first observation is this   
I. THE TEXT THROWS A LITTLE LIGHT UPON WHAT FAITH IS.   
This is not altogether a dark subject, but still it is one upon which there has been a great deal of controversy. You are aware, perhaps, that in the first flush of the Reformation it was asserted by most Divines that saving faith was full assurance, or, at the least, that full assurance of salvation and of a personal interest in Christ entered into the essence of saving faithand this has been maintained by a very large number of Divines and is still maintained by many Christians that to personally believe that Christ died for me is saving faith.   
Now, we believe this to be an error. We prize full assurance beyond all price. We count it to be a gem beyond all earthly values, but we think it is a distressing Doctrine to some of the weak ones of the flock to say that full assurance is necessary to salvation! We believe it to be necessary to deep joy, necessary to edification, necessary to usefulnessbut necessary to salvation we do not believe it to be! We believe there are thousands on the Rock of Ages who sometimes fear they are not thereand tens of thousands who will enter Heaven whose faith never reached beyond the simple reliance upon Christwhich we hold to be the essence of saving faith.   
The persuasion that Christ died for me comes after the exercise of faith and is an outgrowth of that faith. It is faith in full bloom, but it is not necessarily the essence of faith in Christ. Some of those who teach that to believe that Christ died for me is faith, teach at the same time that Christ died for everyone! Now, it will strike your mind at once that this kind of faith which they teach is nothing but the belief of a very simple truism, for if He died for everyone, then He must have died for me and my believing that he died for me may, as far as I can see, be a simple intellectual operationhaving nothing to do with the heartand certainly not requiring the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for anyone can believe that since as long as Christ died for everyone, he died for me! Faith of that sort is a very simple thing and although every Christian is also to perceive that Christ died for him, finally, yet if you begin with that, you begin at the wrong end and you may be guilty of presumption instead of exercising the faith of Gods elect!   
What, then, is the essence of saving faith? It is thistrust in Christ dependence, reliance upon Him. It is a belief that Jesus Christ is the appointed Savior of the world. That He is also the Atonement for sin. But it is more than thatit is a trusting in the work of Christ to save you. As to whether Christ has died for you in particular or not, that you shall find out, by-and-by, but faith is coming empty-handed and accepting Christs fullness. To come naked and take His righteousness to be your glorious dress. To go, vile, to the Fountain which He has filled with blood, to be washed thereinin fact, to have done with all self-confidence and to put your whole reliance in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever has this is savedwhatever else he has not, he is saved! And neither death nor Hell shall ever destroy a man who in simple, honest confidence depends on what Christ has done for the salvation of sinners. If you lay hold upon Christ to be All in All to you and if you say, Nothing but Jesus do I knowwhat He has done is all my rest and all my rejoicing, then you have Gods promise for it, He that believes on Him has everlasting life. And you have it and you, therefore, shall never perish!

This, then, is saving faith, and this is the very soul, and essence, and substance of it! It is not, in itself, full assurance, but full assurance grows out of it. In the Helvetic Confession, faith is said to be a most firm confidence in Christanother little mistake! A most firm confidence in Christ is faith and is strong faithbut there may be faith where there is no most firm confidence, though this may be a very valuable evidence. Faith, however, may sometimes be mixed with unbelief. But where any amount of reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ exists, there is the evidence of true faith, although that reliance may not amount to a happy, comfortable, delightful persuasion of ones own personal salvation. Yet it is faith, saving faith, and will save the soul of him who has it! Let that stand as the first observation.   
II. Secondly, FAITH, WHEREVER IT IS, IS CAPABLE OF GROWTH.   
The Apostles said, Lord, increase our faith. Faith is the gift of God and it is given us by degrees. Faith is not always the same in degree, even at the time of the new birth. All children are not alike strong when they are born into the world. All faith is not alike strong at first. Sometimes those who are first at the beginning, get last afterwardsand sometimes those who are last at the beginning, outstrip the others! God does not give us all the same endowment of faith when we commence. Some of us are very tender, much troubled and find it very difficult to lay hold even upon the least of Gods promises. But the faith is all of the same naturethough it is not all of the same quantity and degreeit is all the same quality. A diamond is a diamond, though it is no bigger than a pea or the point of a pinit is precisely of the same character as the Koh-I-Noor, though it is not so large. So with faith. Faith as little as a grain of mustard seed is just as much the faith of Gods elect as if it were as large as a mountain! It is still living faith. It is the same, though smaller in amount. It is not always the same in quantity when we receive it, but after we have received it, it grows.

This is proved by the later lives of the Apostles themselves. Take Simon Peter as an instance. At one time poor Simon, indeedhow he was to be pitied! He sat down to warm his hands at a fire in the High Priests palace and, as he was sitting there, a pert servant girl said to him, You, also, were with Him. And so weak was Peters faith that he actually denied his Master! But not many weeks after that, the Holy Spirit descended on Simon Peter and now the same man who blushed with fear before the flippant maid is standing up before thousands in the streets of Jerusalem and delivering himself with the greatest bravery on behalf of the Gospel of the Crucified Christ! There is now no fear, or trembling, or unbelief in Simon Peter, for Pentecost has come and he is made strong and bold by the Holy Spirit! How wonderfully has he changed! You might almost have thought that there were two Simon Peters, rather than one, so marvelously has he grown in faith and courage!

Further, that faith grows is very clear from the fact that there have been and are thousands of other persons who have evidently had more faith than you or I ever had, and yet who have found that their faith was not always strong. Look at the martyrshow they went to their deaths singing hymns on the road. How many of them triumphed in the amphitheater when wild beasts tore them to pieces! How they were thrown into damp, reeking dungeons, where they laid until the mildew grew upon them and there they were left to starveand yet how there they died with joy in their hearts and songs on their lips! Those were men and women of faith whose shoelaces you and I are not worthy to unloosethey were far, far greater than we! And yet if you had spoken to any of them, they would have said that they were no better than we are when they began, but that God had, by His Grace, nurtured and tended their faith until it had become what it was. Do you know what this growth in faith is? We never become nursing fathers and mothers to any of our Brothers and Sisters or our hearers until we have this growth in faith. I bless God that I have seen many of you grow in faithand my earnest prayer is that everyone of you may grow to the full assurance of hope unto the end, so that I may have to say of you all, Your faith grows exceedingly, and your love unto all the saints. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, we do see faith grow in others quite as plainly as we have ever seen the shrubs and the plants growing in the field!

Moreover, I think you and I are conscious that our own faith has grown. I know mine has. I know it is weaker, sometimes, for we may grow backwards. Yet I am conscious, taking the run of the years, that my faith is stronger than it was.

I will tell you how faith grows. Sometimes it grows in intensity. You believe the same things, but you believe them more firmly. A child has a pearl in its hand. Yes, but now the child has grown up into a man and he has the same pearl, but how differently he holds it! When, as a little child, he held the pearl, then you might, perhaps, have taken it away from him. But now that he is a man, see how he doubles his fists and grasps the treasure! So it is with the man who grows in faith. He gets such a grip upon eternal Truths of God that you cannot take them from him! He has learned to stand firmly. He is not carried about by every wind of doctrine. He keeps the helm of his soul fixed right to the port where he is boundlet the wind blow and the storm howl and moan as it may!

Faith also grows not only in intensity but in extent, so that you believe more than you once did. At first we believe a few great Truths and then knowledge comes to our assistance and instead of only three or four great majestic Truths of God, we learn tenand as we advance further we learn a hundred! Sometimes, however, we grieve to confess that as our faith grows in extent, it diminishes in intensity, which is a very poor gain. But if we believe more and believe all with the same intensity as we did at first, then is our faith growing, indeed, and we are advancing after a most healthy and happy fashion!

Faith does growwe know it doesin these two respects, for we have, some of us, been conscious of the growth in ourselves. Beloved, it would be a very strange thing if faith did not grow. It was a great miracle when Joshua made the sun stand still because that day the sun was the only thing in all the world that did stand still! Everything else was moving. It is part of Gods law that every star shall revolvethat there shall be nothing inert. Even the great sun, itself, rolls round and is constantly going on its mighty way. The sun was the only thing that day that stood still and, therefore, it was, indeed, a miracle! Now, if faith did not grow, it would be the only thing in the Christian that stood still and did not growfor everything else in the whole man certainly grows.

Does not Christ teach us this, again, by His talking of, first, the blade, then the ear and then the full corn in the ear? At another time we are told that we are children and that we think as children, and speak as childrenbut that when we shall become men, we shall put away childish things. In other places something is said about little children, then about children, and then about young men and then about the fathers. I will not quote all the instancesthey are too numerousin which both by metaphor and by plain speech, we are taught in Gods Word that the whole Christian grows and, therefore his faith, which is as his right arm, must surely grow, too!

Faith, then, is a matter of growth. And now thirdly

III. GROWTH OF FAITH IS VERY DESIRABLE. I said at the first that the very least faith is saving, but then it is not desirable that we should only have the very least faith. It is exceedingly desirable that we should get the greatest possible faith!

Growth in faith is desirable and it is so, first of all, because unbelief is a very great sin and where there is little faith there is evidently lurking unbelief and, consequently, sinand no true Christian would like to be easy while he is daily committing sin. It is not possible for us to be weak in faith without transgressing. Weak faith may bring us a blessing, but weakness in faith is an eviland to indulge weakness in faith and not to struggle out of it would only be a willful increase of guilt!

Brothers and Sisters, I do not think that we ever estimate aright what a bitter and an evil thing our unbelief is. It is a question, really, whether there is any other sin which makes so direct a stab at the Truth of God as this does! It is a question whether there is any sin more defiling to us, or more dishonoring to God. Brothers and Sisters, we ought to daily aspire to the highest faith in order that we may expel unbeliefand so be delivered from constant sin!

Growth in faith also is necessary for our sanctification. It is by faith that sin is kept down and that all our Divine Graces grow. Unless faith is vigorous, we cannot expect to be making progress towards perfection. Sanctification is a daily and unceasing thing. It is carried on in our thoughts and hearts by the Holy Spirit, but faith in the precious blood is the great means He uses for that sanctifying.

We overcome sin through the blood of the Lamb applied to us day by day by the hyssop of faith. Brothers and Sisters, if you neglect your faith, you will soon find that, struggle as you will, to advance in other Graces, your struggles will be all in vain. Faith, faith, faiththis is the reservoir and if this is not well filled, the pipes will soon run dry!

Again, growth in faith is necessary to our comfort. Little-Faith goes to Heaven, but his feet are sore on the road. He gets into the Kingdom, but it is like a leaky vessel that has cast its precious cargo overboard and only just manages to get into portit almost founders at the harbors mouth. Little-Faith stumbles at a straw, but

Great-Faith is very full of comfort. His mind is stored with grateful recollections of past mercies and his eyes beam with the fond anticipations of mercies yet to come and so Great-Faith makes a Heaven for itself here belowand goes towards the songs of Glory rehearsing some of them on the road! Give me strong faith in God and I need ask for nothing else, for strong faith will turn poverty into wealth, weakness into strength, deep sorrows into lasting joys and monster difficulties into marvelous triumphs! More faith and you shall have plenteous comfort. It is always feast days and feast nightsit is a merry Christmas all the year round to a soul that has an unstaggering faith in the promises of the blessed God!

Strong faith is also very necessary to our usefulness. If we go to our work timidly, scarcely knowing our own interest in Christ, we may have a blessing, but it is not likely to be a great one. But when we know whom we have believed and have tasted and handled that the good Word of God is assuredly ours, then what we speak will come with Grace and power and under the varying unction of the Holy Spirit there are more probabilities of our success when we work with faith than when we work with doubting! Indeed, it is to faith that the blessing comes! I question whether our preaching in unbelief is of much service, but if we preach believing that souls will be saved, then they will be saved! If we preach relying on Gods promise that His Word shall not return unto Him void, it will not return void, but there shall be fruit for the sower according to the assurance of our faithful God!

Brothers and Sisters, I cannot now speak to you at length upon a topic so important, but I leave it with you, being assured that you cannot think too much of it. To have your faith growing exceedingly is desirable above all things. Seek for it, I pray you, and may the Lord grant it to you according to His fullness of mercy. But now let us ponder the joyous truth, that

IV. GROWTH IN FAITH IS OBTAINABLE.   
The Apostles would not have asked for it, would not have been allowed to ask for it, if it had not been possible to receive it! They did ask for it, they did receive it and, therefore, you and I may ask for it and receive it. They exhort us to obtain itat least they practically do so by their exampletherefore we may obtain it. It is always a sad thing and greatly depressing to Christian growth when you picture in your minds eye great and eminent saints as being far above anything that you can ever be. Brothers and Sisters, let me beseech you, when you read the life of such a man as Dr. Payson, do not say, He is such a spiritually-minded man! I shall never be like he! You shall be like he by Gods Grace! When you turn to the life of Whitfield, young man who is about to enter the Christian ministry, let not the Evil Spirit say, You cannot be so devoted and so seraphic in earnestness as he was. Why not? Where Whitfield fell short of being perfect, you fall short with him and you will be short, indeedbut why not be as he? The same Master who made him has also put you upon the wheel. The same Spirit who kept him fervent and faithful has promised to dwell in you! Why should not the same results be produced? I know that you sometimes look up to those who are more advanced in the Divine Life than you are. You who have lately been united to the Christian Church envy themyou do not think that you can ever reach their standard. Ah, Beloved, be it your prayer to reach the best in the Church, that if it is the Lords will, you may feel yourselves to be less than they are and yet to be in reality far fuller of Gods Grace and love, and every good thing than any of them! Aspire, my Brothers and Sistersdo not despair, but aspire for Gods Glory, to prove to this wicked world that Christianity has not lost its vigorthat it is still possible for us to be as simple-minded and as heroic as the Apostles were. Aspire to what they obtained! Ask for an increase of faith, as they asked for itand when you have it, be not content even with that, nor think that you cannot by any possibility be as full of faith as they were!   
I know that the enemy will tell you that you are placed in a position where you cannot possibly be so full of Divine Grace. Tell the enemy that he is a liar from the beginning! You may be in a position where you cannot be extensively useful. You may be where you are neither called upon nor expected to do many of the works which others perform. But circles are admired and praised not because of their largeness, but their roundness! So you will have honor from God, not according to the size of your sphere, but according to the completeness with which you fill it, doing as unto the Lord who requires of you according to His will and through His Grace. A nursery maid having the care of two or three children, teaching them the sweet story of the love of Christ and seeking to bring their hearts to Jesus may be more faithful than I am with a large congregation continually listening to me. She may do all her workit will be hard for me to do all mine. You with a little shop and much labor to make both ends meetand with a large family to bring up in the fear of Godmay have more honor from the Master, at last, than many a man whose name is blazoned before the world!   
It is not where you are, but what you are. And it is not how you are seen, but how you live in the sight of God. That is the thing that matters! Ah, dear Friends, it is possible that in the sphere where you are, to excel as much in faith as Paul did when preaching at Athens! Or Peter, standing in the midst of Jerusalem before the Parthians, Medes and Elamites! Let nothing deter you. Believe that you would not be taught to pray, Lord, increase our faith, if God would not answer the prayerand that He will answer it and give you the highest faith that ever man hadeven you, so that on the sickbed, or in the midst of poverty you may be as illustrious an example of faith as the best known Believer who has ever adorned the annals of the Church. But to proceedas this growth in faith is obtainable, so, in the next place   
V. THERE IS A PROPER MEANS FOR OBTAINING IT.   
If I might advise you, the first means I would lay down for making faith grow would be that which the Apostles adopted, namely, prayer. They said, Lord, increase our faith. Pray much that your faith may grow. Oh, I am afraid in this naughty age in which we are so busy with a thousand cares, that we are only too deficient at the Mercy Seat and this accounts for the fact that there is so much superficial religion among us. If you would learn to believe Gods promises, go with the promises to God and see them in the light of His Countenance! Plead them with solemn earnestness, not wavering before the Mercy Seat till you have a comfortable assurance that God will be to you what He has said. Let us have more prayer and there will be more faith!   
Next to that, search the Word more. The more we are familiar with Gods Inspired Book, the more likely shall we be to believe it. If I want to believe a story which is current, I shall best strengthen my credence of its truthfulness by hearing it constantly repeated. When I begin to examine a Doctrine and I see that the Doctrine is clear, then I cannot help believing it. Now come to the Word of God, pure and unadulterated, and, as you read it, it will be its own witness. The glory which gilds each sacred page, majestic like the sun, will flash before your eyes and you will then marvel that you ever could have doubted it. And let me tell you many a promise which you have passed over before, or thought it to be scarcely worth attention, will shine out in splendor and delight your eyes and enrapture your spirit! Oh, how dead is the Word of God at one time, to what it is at another! You shall read it in the dark without the help of the Holy Spirit and it shall be to you like Christ in the eyes of the unregenerate worldwithout form and comeliness. But at another time, when God shines upon it, you shall find it to be marrow and fatness to your soul and you will wonder that you have ever risen from perusing it, so delightful shall it be to your soul!   
Search the Word much! Seek to enquire into the facts and Doctrines of the Gospel. There are very few theological treatises issued now-a-days. You do not read theology. You do not care about it! I know what you readthree-volume novels and especially religious tales in magazines! I wish that we were rid of these religious tales. I like irreligious tales much better, for when they are downright irreligious, people will not read the trashbut when these tales are flavored with a little of the spice of godliness, they go down with them and their heads get stuffed up with the silly nonsense they read! And instead of being the better by what they read, they are rather the worse. I wish you would sit down and study some of the good old stuff which your grandmothers used to read. Some of those old men and women used to sit down and when they had put on their spectacles, would read through some treatise on the Doctrines of the Gospel. Those were the grand old women who, when the minister was unsound, soon let him know that they would hear no such old wives fables, but would only have good Gospel Truth! And their husbands were of the same sortthey read and searched for themselves. Now-a-days I believe that if a man has only a glib tongue, he may preach very much what he likes. There are hundreds of our hearers who today would go after a Calvinist or even a hyper-Calvinist and tomorrow would go and hear an Arminianand it would all be good because of the garnishing and because of the little sprigs and flowers all over the dish! God deliver us from such religion as this and give us to know the Truth of God by searching it out! Do, dear Friends, search out the Truth in Gods Word. Seek to get a firm grip and deep knowledge of it. It were well for half the Christians in England if they would learn the Assemblys Catechism. They would get a world of knowledge even by that compendium, but getting the Truth by the Word is an even more profitable means of increasing our faith!

Let me say again that faith is very frequently helped to grow by communion with the saints. Those of you who are younger will often be helped by talking with the more mature and advanced in the Christian life. Yes, the sickbeds of those who are tried and afflicted are often a school in which young disciples may learn lessons in faith! Here you may be enriched with pearls and gems which can be bought in no other market. And suffering saintsmen and women who have been in the furnace and have the smell of the fire upon them, who have become like silver purified seven times, who can bear their witness to help given in days of poverty and of deep sustaining Grace in seasons of sore bodily and mental anguishthese can greatly enrich and, through what they shall give, your faith shall grow!   
And your faith will also grow, no doubt, when God treats you as He has treated them, for, after all, other peoples experience is not of half the value to us as is our own. It is when we feel ourselves in the pinch, when we begin to pass through the fire that we fly to the Eternal God and rejoice that underneath are the everlasting arms. Ask for the sanctified use of affliction! Pray for the sanctified use of prosperity, too, and so by all Providential means your faith will grow.   
Remember, however, that the only real mode of growth in faith is by the power of the Holy Spirit. As I said at the commencement of this discourse, Peters growth in faith came upon him at Pentecost. And it was the same with the others of the twelvethey became new men because the Spirits power rested upon them. Beloved, if we have more of the power of the Spirit of God, more exercise of His power within us, our faith will increase!   
Faith, then, is a growing thing. We ought to desire to have it grow. It can grow and I have told you some of the means by which it may grow. And now two or three minutes upon   
VI. THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN HINDER ITS GROWTH.   
I say only two or three minutes, though it is a very large subject. You can very easily hinder your growth in faith. You can do it by neglecting faith, by letting your Bible grow dusty, by leaving a ministry which is edifying, by despising the Holy Spirit. You can do it by not exercising what you already have. You cannot lose your faith if it is true faith, but you can lose much of its comparative power by worldly-mindedness, by giving yourselves up to covetousness, by forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as is the manner of someby falling into sin, by tampering with the flesh, by indulging in vanityby anything which will grieve the Holy Spirit! You may also weaken your faith by dwelling far from the sun. Dwellers in lands of snow and ice soon grow cold, and so may it be with us by living far from God and the Sun of Righteousness. As by refraining from meat a man may soon grow weak, so by abstaining from spiritual food and soul nourishing, our faith will soon decay. As a long drought quickly makes the flowers of the garden to droop their heads, so if there is a drought of Divine influence upon you, very soon your faith will begin to wither. By living, however, close to God and simply looking up to Him for everything, your faith my continue to grow until it gets to be the full assurance of faith and, like Abraham, you are strong in faith, giving glory to God. And here I shall close by saying, let it be one of the resolute pursuits of our life, that being saved we may   
VII. SEEK AFTER THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF GRACE THAT IS OBTAINABLE.   
I have heard of a good womana widowwho was once in great trouble when visited by her pastor, but on a second visit she was found to be very happy. What has happened? enquired her pastor. What has made you so cheerful? She said, I have been reading that precious word, Your Maker is your Husband. How has that comforted you? he said. Why, she answered, when my husband was alive, I always lived up to his income. But now that my Maker is my Husband, I will try to live up to His income and oh, what a task I have got before me if I am to live up to the income of God that has no bounds and no limits and knows of no such thing as exhaustion! If I may draw upon Him to the utmost extent of His income, how richly I may live!   
Well, now, let us adopt the good womans policy and try to live according to the income of our blessed Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ! Then shall our faith grow exceedingly and our love and all our Divine Graces!   
Now I am afraid there are some here who have no faith, who have never trusted Christ. Then, dear Friends, it is our solemn duty to remind you, before we sit down, that without faith it is impossible to please God. You have come here, tonight, and I am glad you haveand some of you come oftenand I am rejoiced. You are honest, sober, moral, amiable. This is all well, but you would like to please God, would you not? Well, but without faith it is impossible for you to please Him! You may do what you may, but without faith it is impossible to please God! God will never accept anything from any of us unless He sees the blood of His Son with it. If you do not go to Christ, it is no use going to the Father, for no man comes to the Father, says Christ, but by Me.  
What? You have forgotten to trust in Jesus? You have thought that something else would do? You have been trying your fancied good works, your prayers, your feelings? Now, dear Friends, remember what the Apostle Paul did. He went round about for many years to establish his own righteousness, but as soon as he trusted in Christ, he said, Those things which were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ: yes, doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord. Now, I will tell you. You may, perhaps, be a churchman and you feel very pleased to think that you have been so regular in your life. Or you may be a Dissenter and feel proud to think you are such a consistent Nonconformist. Now, if ever you are converted, these things which are gain to you now, you will count to be less than nothing! You, too, will count them to be loss as compared with Christ. Yes, and your prayers, your repentance, what you have given to charity and what you have donethis, and that, and the otheryou will look upon them all as being less than nothing and take Christ to be everything to you! What are you doing, now? said a good old Divine to a Brother who was dying. He said, I am doing, now, what I have done many times before in healthI am taking all my good works and all my bad worksindeed, they are so much alike that I can scarcely tell which is whichand I am tying them all in one bundle and throwing them overboard as fast as I can! And I am just clinging to Christ with all my heart and all my soul. This is the only way of safety. None but Jesus! Nothing of yoursnot one brass farthingbut Christ, Christ, ChristChrist at the top and the bottom, at the beginning and the end, first, last and throughout!   
You must have nothing but the Lord Jesus Christ! And if you do this night depend upon Him, why, my dear Friend, your sins are all forgiven! Just what Christ said to the poor grateful leper, I say to you in Christs nameif you really do depend upon HimYour faith has saved you. Go in peace! Though your past life may have been ever so vile and you have come in here without God and without hope, yet if you now believe in Jesus Christ and rely alone upon Him, none of your sins shall be mentioned against you any more forever. I have blotted out your sins like a cloud and, like a thick cloud, your transgressions.   
May you have faith given you tonight and then another day, after you have faith, may you pray, Lord, increase my faith. That is not your prayer tonightbe thankful if you have any faith at all! But you who have faith tonight, pray tonight, and pray always, Lord increase our faith.

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OUR SERVICE FOR CHRIST NEVER FINISHED   
NO. 2334

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 19, 1889.

**But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him, by-and-by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird yourself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you shall eat and drink? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Luke 17:7-10.**

THESE words are not addressed to the general congregation. You notice that the chapter begins, Then said He unto the disciples. Even they felt as if Christs words were too heavy for them and so, when you get to the fifth verse, you read, And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith, as if only the very strongest of them were able to receive His teaching just thenHe was describing such difficult duties and prescribing so peculiar a path. Mark you, He was not laying down the way of salvation, but pointing out a path of service for those who were already saved. We must be saved, first, and must serve afterwards. To hope to serve Christ so as to win salvation is a fallacy, a delusion of our proud hearts. But to be saved by His Grace as a matter of pure favor and then, afterwards, to serve Him, having gratitude for our great motive, is the right order and a very different thing from self-righteousness. It is to disciples, then, that the words about which I speak, tonight, are addressed.

We must not start back at the sight of the service which is required of us. It is our highest honor that we are allowed to be the servants of our Savior and, being servants, unless we are so only nominally, and not really, we must not be offended at anything that is demanded of us. We must try to fill up the word, servant, and show the world what a servant can be! It is the duty of every Christian to turn each common silver word into a golden one. Whatever husband, or father, or son, may mean in reference to ordinary society, it must mean something

more when it gets into the Church of God! We must fulfill it, we must fill it full! We must make something more of it than it used to be. So with regard to servants, if we are servants of Christ, let us be servants, as the mathematicians say, to the nth degreeto the very highest possible degree! Let us elevate and enlarge our calling till, if men want to know what a servant is, they will only have to ask Christ, our Master, and He will point to us and say, These are the kind of servants that My love and My Grace can produce. Money could not buy such and no rate of wages could secure such service as they are prepared to freely render.

With those two thoughts on your minds, that, being saved, you are servants, and being servants, it is your intense desire to make that word mean all it possibly can mean, follow me while I try to bring out the teaching of the passage before us.

I. First, WE ARE, ADMITTEDLY, THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST. If the word, doulos, is interpreted here, slave, as it certainly might be, we are quite willing to be known as the bond-slaves of Jesus Christ. Like Paul, we have no objection, even, to be branded with the mark of a slave, and with him we dare to say, From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.   
We are the servants, the slaves of Christ, and we rejoice to be so because in this lies our deliverance from the bondage of sin. No man can really be his own masterhe will serve either one lord or another. We are such dependent creatures that we must give ourselves up to be either the servants of sin, or the servants of righteousness. We were once the servants of sin. We were children of wrath, even as others. We found ourselves born into hereditary bondage which we also freely chose, for the iron entered into our will and our will chose the bondage of evil passions and corrupt desires. One way or another, though each of us differently, we resolved to be the servants and the serfs of the Prince of Darkness, that Evil One who still rules over the children of disobedience! Now that we have become the servants of Christ, we are freed from the bondage of sinHis service is our freedom! There was no other method of setting us free from the bondage of the black prince than that of bringing us under a Divine and blessed servitude to Immanuel, the Prince of Holiness and Peace. We therefore rejoice in being His servants because it means deliverance from an older servitude, even the service of sin and Satan!   
Our being Christs servants is the absolute result of redemption. We are bought with a pricetherefore we are not our own. Standing on Calvary and gazing with wonder at those purple founts from which flow our salvation and eternal life, we feel that, if One died for all, then all died, and that, inasmuch as Jesus Christ there bought us with His precious blood, we are His inalienable property and belong to Himbody, soul and spiritforever. Such a price, paid by such an One, in the midst of such circumstances of shame and derision, binds us as His forever and ever! We do not want to be our ownour purchase by Christ is our delight and we willingly yield ourselves up to Him who has paid for us a price infinitely more than we could ever be conceived to be worth! Hence our service is founded upon our deliverance from the bondage of sin and it is also the direct result of our redemption by the blood of Christ.   
Moreover, as you sang just now, you helped me to another pointwe are Christs by our own pledge. You remember your declaration *Tis done! The great transactions done;   
I am my Lords and He is mine.*   
You added to that the further resolve   
*High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow, That vow renewed shall daily hear   
Till in lifes latest hour I bow,   
And bless in death a bond so dear.*   
If we were not Christs, tonight, we would not rest an hour until we were! We wish to be His, we wish to be perfectly Hisour prayer is that every thought may be brought into captivity to Him. Our soul pines after the perfect liberty of complete subjection to the will of God in Christ Jesus! Is it not so, Brothers and Sisters? Have you not lifted your hand to Heaven so that you cannot go back? And what is more, has not every desire to go back ceased out of your heart? If you had been mindful of the place from where you came out, you might have had abundant opportunity to returnbut you desire something beyondyour motto is, Onward, upward, homeward, heavenward. You want to get away from the place from where you came. You belong to Christ! You confess the impeachment, tonight, wondering much that you should have the joy of daring to feel that you belong to Christ! Have you any sweeter hymn in the whole repertoire of your heart than this   
*Oh! I am my Beloveds,   
And my Beloveds mine?*   
Do you not sing that in your happiest moments, in the quiet of your spirit? If so, then you are admittedly the servant of Christ.   
We regard this service as a great gift of the Free Grace of God. We look back to the eternal counsels and we see the Father choosing us in Christ Jesusand giving us to His dear Son before the foundation of the world! We see our Lord Jesus undertaking, on our behalf, to present us faultless to the Father in the day of His appearingand it is a great delight to us to feel that it is because God willed it that we are now the property of Christ. God decreed it. God laid plans for it. It was in the purpose and Covenant of unchangeable Grace that we should belong to Christ. In this we rejoice, not as a bondage imposed, but as a Grace given! Oh, what would we not have given, years ago, when first we were awakened, if we could have even hoped that we belonged to Christ? And now that we know that we are His, and none others, and that He will keep us to the endit is the highest delight of our spirit! Do not think, dear Friends, any of you, that we consider ourselves demeaned by submitting to a very slavery to Christ! We wish to make the bondage as tight as it can possibly bewe desire not to have any will, or any wish, or even any imagination that would go flying over the Divine boundaries of Gods will! We would be wholly Histhat is our honor, our crownGods best gift to us!   
More than that, we find that the service of Christ is its own reward. What if He never smiled on me? If He would let me serve Him, I would count the fact of service to be a smile! If He should drive me from His Presence, if He would only let me glorify Him, I would be satisfied to make that my Heaven! To be completely given up to live for God and to glorify Christwhat larger happiness could a redeemed creature desire? There is reward enough to us in being permitted to unloose the laces of His shoes, or to be engaged in His farm-work, as the text says, plowing, or feeding cattle, so long as it is but done for Him!   
Besides, there is a rich reward in store for the righteous and we may look for it. We remember how Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward and, without being mercenary, we may anticipate our reward. God will not let His people work for nothing and though the reward is not of debt, but of Grace, yet verily there is a reward for the righteous! In that day when Christ shall come in the Glory of His Father, He will award to His saints their several crowns. To those who have been faithful, He will give according to the measure of their faithfulness. You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. We count it a high honor not to be in the civil service, but to be in the Divine service! How ardently some young men are looking forward for a place, under government. That is exactly what I haveit is just what every child of God hasa place under Divine Government! We do not wish for anything better than this. O you glorified saints, if we may but come among your thrones, or even lie at your feet, we will make no choice, so that we may but see our Lords face and, meanwhile, if it shall be our lot to do the dishwashers work in Christs kitchen, we will count it most honorable employmentand we will do it as unto Him.   
This servitude to Christ is to us unutterable freedom. We are never free till Christ binds us. Here I stand, tonight, He has bound my heart and fastened it to Himself! He has bound my hands and they must serve Him! He has bound my feet and they must run in the way of His commands. He has bound my tongue, too. It sometimes speaks amiss, but yet it longs to speak only and wholly for Him. My Master, tie my eyes and my eyelids, too, and bind every filament of my nature, every nerve, and every muscle of my body, and every hair of my headand let me be wholly Yoursin absolute bondage unto You and then shall I cry, O God, truly I am Your servant! I am Your servant, You have loosed my bonds! We never have our bonds loosed until, like the Psalmist, we can twice over mark the absolute servitude to Himself into which Christ has brought us.   
That is my first remark on the text and there is much in itwe are, admittedly, the servants of Christ.   
II. Secondly, OUR SERVICE IS NOT FINISHEDWhich of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him, by-and-by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?   
Observe, first, that our service may have been long and arduous. We may have been plowing. I speak to some here who have had a very hard bit of plowinginstead of breaking the soil, you have, sometimes, thought that you would break the plow and many a time the bullocks, unaccustomed to the yoke, have been very difficult to driveand some of them that are accustomed to the yoke have taken to kicking every now and then. You have not found plowing to be playing! I am sure no plowman ever does. He finds that it is tough work. He earns his living well who earns it by his plowing and, if some of the gentlemen in London who quarrel with their wages, had to do a plowmans work, and to get a plowmans wages, I guarantee you that they would think themselves better off at the work they have to do now! A good days plowing is about as hard a days toil as a man can have.

Well, some of us have been plowing, for the Master has given us difficulties. He has given us trials, He has given us cares and we have also had to feed cattle. I cannot say that I have been literally feeding cattle but I have found it more trouble to feed some of you than I should have had in feeding cattle! I had an old friend who was 40 years a shepherd and he lived to be 80 years old. During the last 40 years of his life he was a minister and he said, one day, I have had two flocks. The first 40 years I fed sheep and the second 40 years I fed menand the second flock was a deal more sheepish than the first. I can vouch for the latter partnot that all of you are like sheep, for there are some of you who are easily fedbut there are others who are not. I remember a young man who left the Church because he said that I never gave him a bit of bone on which he could try his teeth. Well, now, I thought that if I took out the bone and gave meat, alone, I was doing the best thing possible. But this foolish youth wanted a bit of gristle, not that he could digest it, but he wanted something that he could not digest. I could have given him plenty of that sort of stuffI had no end of it at homebut I save that for my dogs and bring the meat for the people I have to feed.   
You can never please everybody and there are some people who are like those described in Psalm Sixty-Seven. I think that David said that they were fools, but I will not say that. And further he says of them, Their soul abhors all manner of meat. There was no feeding them! I would rather feed cattle than feed them. Cattle will eat what you give them, as a general rule, but we have some in our congregations, dear souls, that are afraid to feed on the promises of God, afraid to feed, even, on the Bread of Life. They are not worthy, they say, which is quite truebut then we are not fed according to our worthiness in the Covenant of Grace! This feeding of cattle, this feeding of men, is not the easiest thing in the world.   
The text also teaches that our service may change its form. Some of you have been at Sunday School work. Others of you have been at slum work. Some have been visiting the lodging housesothers have stood in the streets and preached for Christ. You have had a good long day of plowing and feeding cattle, but your work is not done. Oh, by no means! When the man mentioned by our Lord had been out all day in the field and then came home, he had just to tidy himself up and do a little domestic service, for, in the East, the manservant, after plowing in the field, had to gird his loins and prepare his masters dinnerand serve at the table waiting upon his lord. Well, now, dear Friends, after a good long days work you shall have a change of occupation, but you shall still go on working! You have not finished your service yet. Have you had 40 years of it? Well, that is a long day, but you have not done work yetthere is something else for you to do! If you cannot go out plowing, you shall go down into the kitchen and do some cooking! And if you cannot feed the cattle, you shall bring up a dish of food for your master. This is a change of work for you, but you are to keep on as long as you live.   
I said, one Sabbath morning, that I feared I might not be able to keep on preaching, meaning that I feared that I should soon be laid aside by illness, which I hope may not now occurand somebody said that I was not going to preach anymore, I was going to retire. I shall retire when four men carry me on their shoulders to the grave, but not till then, by Gods Grace! As long as there is breath in our body and we are able to say a word for Christ, we certainly shall not give up our service! Nor will any of you, I hope, ever talk about retiring from your Masters work. If any of you young men ever think of doing so, I beg you to remember what came to Jonah when he retired from his Masters businessand whales are scarcer, now, than they were then! You had better go down to Nineveh and work away in your Masters service as long as you have health and strength. There may be change of service, but no retiring from service!   
Next, the servant came to service which required greater care. When he was only plowing, or feeding cattle, he could do that in a rough way, with unwashed hands. But now that he has to wait on his master, do you not see how he smartens himself up, how he has washed his hands and face? He would not be properly waiting on his master if he had any filth on his clothes or on the plates. And he attends to this service with all his wits about himhe does not fall asleep over it. If the Lord calls you to be His body-servant, to wait upon Him in close attendance and high communion with Himif He gives you more to do with the souls of men, more to do with the Church of God, as He may do, promoting you to higher service yet remember that you are still a servant and you are to prove that you are still a servant by working with greater care, with more of the spirit of a servant than you ever had before.   
Dear Friends, is it not a mercy for us that our service is not ended? Why should it be finished? Our dependence upon our Master is not ended. We burn His candles, so we ought to do His work. Every mornings breakfast and every days meals are His gifts to usand the clothes on our back are from Himshould we not, then, continue to serve Him? When you can do without Christ, He can do without you. But that will not be, by-andby. You are always depending upon His daily bounty, therefore be thankful that your service is not ended.   
And remember this, alsoit is a blessed thing that our service is not ended because it shows that the Lord still has pleasure in His servant. There is a prayer put into verse, that you and I may constantly offer *Dismiss me not Your service, Lord!*   
Suppose that He had dismissed us and said, Go and sit down to meat, I do not need you anymore. I have no poor child for you to nurse, I have not even anymore cattle for you to feedthere is not even a lamb among My flock for you to carry in your bosom? That would show that He did not love us with the love of complacency, or take such delight in us as He once did. But as long as He gives us something to do, we will gratefully do it, because we will take it as a token of His continual delight in us and, therefore, delighting in us, He gives us something to do for Him. That is my second pointour service is not ended.   
III. And next, WE DO NOT WISH TO BE TREATED AS IF IT WERE Which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him, by-and-by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?   
That would show that his service was ended. But we do not wish our Master to treat us so. I mean thiswe do not expect freedom from trial. Do you? We read of Abraham as being sorely tried and wonderfully prevailing. And then we come upon this text, And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt (that is, try, or test) Abraham. Yes, and after all your years of service, after you have been honored in bringing souls to Christ, you will have to still be tried. He will not say, Go and sit down to meat, but He will bid you gird yourselves and come and serve Him.   
Also, dear Friends, we are not to expect honor here. After many years of preaching the Gospel, one might be tempted to say to himself, I have a name and some esteem among men. I must take care of them. That is a temptation from Satanthrow it all away. Serve your Lord and care nothing about your honor, or your reputation, for it is not for Him to say to you, Go and sit down to meat. If He still calls you to do some service for Him in the defense or proclamation of His Truth, do not ask Him to treat you otherwise.   
Then, we are not to think that we cannot do anymore. Do I speak to any Christian who has come in here, tonight, saying, I really think that I must give up this service and give up that? Do no such thing, I pray you! Hold on to it as for dear life. Your engagement to your Master is not a five years service, like that of a soldier, but you are His for life. Yours is a lifelong bondage to Him, a happy apprenticeship to your Lord and Master throughout the whole term of your naturalno, of your spiritual life! Say not that you can do no morethere is much yet remaining for you to do! Pick up a new thread and begin to spin, and He will find you more. Take up a bit of iron you have never tried to fashion, put it in the fire, and see whether you cannot make some fresh instrument there. Give yourself up continually to serve your Lord yet more and more, and think not that your work is finished.   
And, Beloved, we must not be beginning to look for our reward here. If you think to have Heaven this side the Jordan, you are greatly mistaken. Heaven is to be hereafter, but Heaven is not, by-and-by. This is the place for fightingout with your sword! This is the field for laborget you to your plow! If such a wish could come to you in Heaven, you might desire to get back, again, to the service of earth, that you might do still more for your Lord. When I get to Heaven and you get to Heaven, if we know that false doctrine is spreading in the world, we shall long to go back and confront the adversary, again, if such wishes are permitted in Heaven. While souls are perishing for lack of knowledge, let none of us want to be away from the earthso long as men need us to tell them the way of salvation, let us gladly continue at our worklet us serve God, my Brothers and Sisters, while we have the opportunity   
*In works which perfect saints above   
And holy angels cannot do.*   
Now is our time for preaching! Now is your time for teaching the children! Brothers, seven heavens could not find us another pulpit when once we get to Glorywe might almost wish that they could. What opportunities of praying with the sick and instructing ignorant children you now have! You will not have them when once you are in the other world. Therefore use the golden hours you have while you are here below. Your service is not finished, so do not wish to be treated as though it were. Ask not honor from men. Ask not even for honor from God, if that were meant to exempt you from further shame, from further suffering, from further reproach for Christs dear sake. The further we go in His service, the more resolved we are to give up everything for Him. When we first started, we may have thought of making some reserve, but now we have gone so far into the river of consecration that we find waters to swim in and we can truly say

*Yet if I might make some reserve,   
And duty did not call,   
Id love my God with zeal so great   
That I should give Him all.*   
May you not only sing it, but may you mean it and practice it, for Christs sake!   
IV. Now we go a step further. WE ARE ALWAYS TO PUT OUR MASTER FIRST. We are servants and our work is not doneneither ought we to wish to be treated as though it were. We are not ourselves to sit down to meat, but we are to hear our Master say, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird yourself, and serve Me, till I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you shall eat and drink. I will very hurriedly mention these points.   
First, we are to prefer service to rest. Service is feeding our Masterrest is refreshing ourselves. If we may have a choice, we must always choose that which will be for His Glory. If it is necessary to rest for His Glory, rest. But if you can better serve Him by continued activityeven unto deathselect the service.   
Next, we must put His pleasure before our own. I must not want what will please me, but what will please Him. It ought always to please us to have the opportunity of pleasing Him. Did not Abraham run unto the herd, to fetch a calf, tender and good, that he might feed the blessed ones when, under the tree, they came to favor him with a visit? What an honor is put upon us when we are permitted to feed Christ and to wait upon Him till He has eaten and drunk! I can hardly conceive of myself as having the high honor, on bended knee, of waiting on my Lord. If He would but once come to my house, what would I not do for Him? So have I often said, yet the whole of our life should be an entertainment of Christ, our blessed Prince. We should always be seeking to gratify Him, to give Him to drink that which He thirsts for in the salvation of the souls of menand to give Him to eat of that which He delights in, namely, the holiness and consecration of His people. His pleasure is to be put before our pleasure.   
And, next, His people are to be preferred before ourselves. His people are His bodytherefore think more of His body than of your own body. Let the poor saints be very near your heartlet the man in whom you see anything of Christ be loved because of your Lords likeness which you see in him. Always put Christs people before yourself.   
And put His name before your own name. I want you to dwell upon that. There is always a tendency among us to want to keep up our own respectability and, if we are ministers, to keep up our own name. The temptation has come to men who have been eminently useful to found a denomination for the preservation of their name. George Whitefield was saved from thatwhen some people wanted him to set up a new sect to be called by his name, he saidNo, let my name perish, but let Christs name stand forever. So say I, let sect go, and let my name go, and let everything go but let Christ and His Truth be preserved! Make no reckoning between a grain of Christs Glory and a ton of your own. Always think that everything you have has already gone and that you, yourself, have gone, a living sacrifice, wholly given up to your Lord. If you must be made as the offscouring of all things, as the rubbish on the dunghill, so let it be, so that Christ Jesus may be glorious and every particle of His Truth may be set on high in the hearts of men!   
This is the meaning of the text hereyou are not to sit down to meat as yet. You are to gird yourself and serve your Lord and your eating and your drinking shall be glorious, indeed, by-and-by. This same Gospel has a phrase in it which has often staggered me. I mean that passage where Christ says that He will gird Himself and come forth and serve His servants who girded themselves to serve Him. The high reward reserved for you ought to brace you up to the most arduous service as long as you live! God help you to render such service for Christs sake!   
V. I close with this remark, WE ARE TO TAKE OUR PLACE LOW DOWN. Read the latter part of the textDoes he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. I feel inclined to laugh as I read this verse, Does he thank that servant? Only imagine the Lord Jesus Christ thanking you or thanking me for anything that we might do, even if we did all that He commanded us! For Him to thank us for what we do, even if we did all we ought, seems utterly absurd!   
And then, how could He thank us for what we have not done, for we have not done the things which were commanded us? We have left many of them undone and we have done the things we ought not to have done. What thanks do we deserve? None, I think. Then, besides, dear Friends, if we had done all, Christs thanks, if they were given to us, would be for so little service compared with His due. We are, at our best, unprofitable servants. Think of what He has done for us and do not set, side by side with that, anything that we have ever done for Him who loved us to the life and to the deathwho loved us eternally and infinitely. What have we done for Him compared with what He has done for us? Our service put beside Christs is like one single grain of dust put in comparison with the mighty orb of the sun! There is but poor comparison there, but there is no comparison at all between the little we do for Christ and the great, the immeasurable service that He has rendered to us! Truly, we are unprofitable servants to Him.   
And then, Beloved, whatever we have done has all been done in us by Him. Whatever fruit we have, Christ can say to us, From Me is your fruit found. If there is any virtue, if there is any praise, if there is any love, if there is any faith, if there is any zeal, if there is any holinesswas it not all given to us? Are we not all the greater debtors to God, the more we have done? What have we ever profited Him? Growing saints think themselves nothing. Full-grown saints think themselves less than nothing! You may guess your real weight by the depths to which you sink in selfabasement. You may estimate your true value in the market of Heaven by the low estimate you put upon yourself. May the Lord give us, therefore, to be His willing, ardent, earnest servants!   
Oh, never let us have a single lofty thought as to the service that we have rendered, because, you know, if we once begin to think that we are very fine servants, we shall not like to do some of the work which He puts upon us. We shall be too proud for that service and there is many a servant of God who is too tall, too big for his place and, therefore, he is not likely to do much for his Master. There is much to be done that flesh and blood will not do, especially in dealing with some of the Lords people who are ill-mannered and foolish. But we must learn to clean the saucepans, to do the drudges work, the servile work, if we are to be true servants for Christ. We must even select that sort of service and prefer it, if we would be like our Master and desire to take the highest place in the ranks of the Believers. These are hard things, you say. They are, to flesh and blood, but the Lord can give us of His Spirit that we may conquer flesh and blood.   
Do any of you here say, I am no servant of Christ and I do not want to be one? The day will come when you would give your eyes to be His servants, even though you had to serve Him in the dark throughout your life! I would sooner be the Lords dog than the devils darling! It is better to have the lowest place in Christs house than to have the highest place in the tents of wickedness. If any here are unconverted, I can tell them that the sorrows of Christ are better than the pleasures of sin. Christs blacks are whiter than your whitest things. Christs servitude is more heavenly than the worlds heaven. A blow from Christ is better than a kiss from the lips of sin. Oh, if you had but one glance, if you could even have but a glimpse at the Glory that Jesus has, you would come to Him and beg Him, first, to save you, and then to let you serve Him, for it is better to serve Christ in the meanest capacity than to be the Czar of all the Russias, or even empress of the whole world!   
God give me but to have a place where, washed in His blood, I may wear the white garments of an everlasting servitude to Him and He shall have the praise for it, world without end! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 17:1-10.**

Verse 1. Then said He unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses will come. We are so strangely made that even good men do not always agree and there are so many bad men about that they will cast a stumbling block in our way if they can.

1, 2. But woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. To do grievous damage to the soul of the very least of Christs people is a great and ruinous sin nothing can be worse. God grant that we may not do this even inadvertently! Let not the strong indulge in that which would be unsafe for the weak, lest the weak be led into sin through that which the strong Brother might find lawful, but which certainly would not be expedient. May none of us ever willfully grieve any child of God!

3. Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repents. You shall not believe in His penitence? No, surely, you say, that is incorrect. Yes, it is incorrect, but that is what many of you do. I was only reading as things generally arebut that is not Christs direction.

3, 4. Forgive Him. And if He trespass against you seven times in a day. That is seven times too often.   
4. And seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him. Do you say, That is too many times in a day to forgive him? Let me askHow many times in a day have you sinned? How many times in a day does God forgive you? Ah, the seven times a day that you have to forgive your brother are but a small number compared with the innumerable forgivenesses granted to you by our ever-gracious God.

5. And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. For this kind of patient forgiving seemed too much for them, unless they had a larger stock of faith and, therein, they were right. Strength of faith gives strength of love and strength of love makes forgiveness easy.   
6. And the Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say unto this sycamore tree, Be you plucked up by the root, and be you planted in the sea; and it should obey you. Now, if faith as a grain of mustard seed can do this, what cannot strong faith do? What a mercy it is for us that there is so much power in such little faith! A very small piece of dynamite can work great wonders. And within the tiniest morsel of faithif it is no bigger than a grain of mustard seedthere lies concealed almost Omnipotent force! Why do we not exercise that faith more? Nothing is impossible to him that believes. We could blast the very strongholds of Satan with this powerful powder if we would but try it!   
7, 8. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him, by-and-by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird yourself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you shall eat and drink? See, Brothers and Sisters, our position as Believerswe are here as servants. It is not yet the time for feasting. Whatever work we have done, even if it is getting towards the evening of our lifes day, we must not think of sitting down and expecting our Master to wait upon us. No, we must go on with our service and reckon it to be our highest privilege, still, to gird ourselves and wait on Him. This is not the place of resting or of feastingthis is the day of our holy servitude. Let us work on, plowing while we have strength for it, and when the sun goes down at eventide, then waiting, like servants, at the table of their lord.   
9. Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. Do you take off your hat to your servants and say, I am very grateful to you for doing your duty? Not so. And even he who serves God best, may he expect honor as his due? Ah, nohe shall have honor because of the Grace of his Masterbut it is not his place to look for it, much less is it right for him to expect it as his due.   
10. So likewise you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. And who shall praise us for that? The most selfdenying servant of the Savior, the most ardent laborer for the Lord will expect nothing of God except to be blessed by His abounding Grace! What can we deserve of the dear hands of Him who bought us with His blood? Are we not the bondservants of Christ? You are not your own; you are bought with a price. Therefore, whatever service you can render is due to Him! And unto Him let it be freely given without one thought of self-praise or pride because it is done so well.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1541 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS   
NO. 1541

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 6, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And cast you the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 25:30.**

**So likewise you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Luke 17:10.**

**His lord said unto him, Well done, you good and faithful servant. Matthew 25:21.**

THERE is a narrow path between indifference and morbid sensibility. Some men seem to feel no holy anxietythey place their Masters talent in the earth, leave it there and take their pleasure and their ease without a moments compunction. Others profess to be so anxious to be right that they come to the conclusion that they can never be so and fall under a horror of God, viewing His service as a drudgery and Himself as a hard masterthough probably they never say so. Between these two lines there is a path, narrow as a razors edge, which only the Grace of God can enable us to trace. It is free from carelessness and from bondage and consists in a sense of responsibility bravely borne by the help of the Holy Spirit.

The right way usually lies between two extremesit is the narrow channel between the rock and the whirlpool. There is a sacred way which runs between self-congratulation and despondency which is a very difficult track to find and very hard to keep. There are great perils in the consciousness that you have done well and that you are serving God with all your might, for you may come to think that you are a deserving person, worthy to rank among the princes of Israel. The danger of being puffed up can hardly be overestimateda dizzy head soon brings a fall. But perhaps equally to be dreaded, on the other side, is that sense of unworthiness which paralyzes all exertion making you feel that you are incapable of anything that is great or good.

Under this impulse have men fled from the service of God into a life of solitude. They felt that they could not behave valiantly in the battle of life and, therefore, they fled from the field before the fight beganto become hermits or monksas if it were possible to do the Lords perfect will by doing nothing at all and to discharge the duties to which they were born by an unnatural mode of existence! Blessed is that man who finds the straight and narrow way between high thoughts of self and hard thoughts of God, between self-esteem and a timid shrinking from all effort. My desire is that the Spirit of God may guide our minds into the golden median where holy Graces blend and the contending vices, equally natural to our evil hearts, are all excluded.

May the Spirit of God bless our three texts and the three subjects suggested by them, so that we may be put right and then, by infinite mercy, may be kept right until the great day of account. Let us read Matthew 25:30. And cast you the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I. In this, our first text, we have THE VERDICT OF JUSTICE upon the man who did not use his talent. The man is here styled an unprofitable servant because he was slothful, useless, worthless. He did not bring his master interest for his money nor render him any sincere service. He did not faithfully discharge the trust reposed in him as his fellow servants did. Notice, first, that this unprofitable person was a servant. He never denied that he was a servant. In fact, it was by his position as a servant that he became possessed of his one talent and to that possession he never objected.

If He had been capable of receiving more, there is no reason why he should not have had two talents, or five, for the Scripture tells us that the master gave to every man according to his ability. He acknowledged the rule of his master even in the act of burying the talent and in appearing before him to give an account. This makes the subject the more heartsearching for you and for me, for we, too, profess to be servantsservants of the Lord our God. Judgment must begin at the house of God, that is, with those who are in the house of the Lord as children and servants. Let us, therefore, look well to our actions.

If judgment first begins with us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God? If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? If this in our text is judgment upon servants, what will be the judgment upon enemies? This man acknowledged that he was a servant even to the last. And though he was impertinent and impudent enough to express a most wicked and slanderous opinion about his master, yet he neither denied his own position as a servant, nor the fact that his talent was his lords, for he said, Lo, there you have what is yours.

In thus speaking he went rather further than some professing Christians do, for they live as if Christianity were all eating the fat and drinking the sweet and not serving at allas if religion had many privileges but no precepts and, as if, when men were saved, they became licensed loiterers to whom it is a matter of honor to magnify Free Grace by standing idle all day in the market place. Alas, I know some who never do a hands turn for Christ and yet call Him Master and Lord! Many of us acknowledge that we are servantsthat everything we have belongs to our Master and that we are bound to live for Him. So far, so good. But we may get as far as that and yet, in the end, we may be found unprofitable servants and so be cast into outer darkness where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Let us take heed of this.

This man, though a servant, thought ill of his master and disliked his service. He said, I knew that you are an hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. Certain professors who have stolen into the Church are of the same mindthey dare not say that they regret their having joined the Church and yet they act that all may conclude that if it could be undone they would not do the same again. They do not find pleasure in the service of God, but continue to pursue its routine as a matter of habit or a hard obligation.

They get into the spirit of the elder brother and they say, Lo, these many years have I served you; neither transgressed I at any time your commandments and yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. They sit down on the shady side of godliness and never bask in the sun which shines full upon it. They forget that the father said to the elder son, Son, you are always with me and all that I have is yours. He might have had as many feasts, as many lambs and kids as he desiredhe would have been denied no good thing. The presence of his father ought to have been his joy and his delightand better than all merry-makings with his friends. And it would have been so if he had been in a proper state of heart.

The man who hid his talent had carried the evil and petulant spirit much further than that elder brother, but the germs are the same and we must be careful that we crush them at the beginning. This unprofitable servant looked upon his master as one that reaped where he never sowed and used the rake to gather together what he had never scatteredhe meant that his master was a hard, exacting and unjust person whom it was difficult to please. He judged his lord to be one who expected more of his servants than he had any right to look for and he had such a hatred of his unjust conduct that he resolved to tell him to his face what he thought of him.

This spirit may readily creep over the minds of professors. I fear it is brooding over many even now, for they are not content with Christ. If they want pleasure, they go outside the Church to get ittheir joys are not within the circle of which Christ is the center. Their religion is their labor, not their delight. Their God is their dread, not their joy. They do not delight themselves in the Lord and, therefore, He does not give them the desire of their hearts and so they grow more and more discontented. They could not call Him, God, my exceeding joy, and so He is a terror to them. Devotion is a dreary engagement to themthey wish that they could escape from it with an easy conscience. They do not say as much to their secret selves, but you can read between the lines these wordsWhat a weariness it is.

It is no wonder when things come to this pass that a professor becomes an unprofitable servant, for who can do a work, well, which he hates to do? Forced service is not desirable. God needs not slaves to Grace His Throne. A servant who is not pleased with his situation had better leave if he is not content with his master, he had better find another, for their mutual relationship will be unpleasant and unprofitable. When it comes to this, that you and I are discontented with our God and dissatisfied with His work, we had better look for another lord, if any such will have us, for we shall certainly be unprofitable to the Lord Jesus from our lack of love to Him.

Note next, that, albeit this man was doing nothing for his master, he did not think himself an unprofitable servant. He exhibited no selfdepreciation, no humbling, no contrition. He was as bold as brass and said unblushingly, Lo, there you have what is yours. He came before his master with no apologies or excuses. He did not join with those who have done all and then say, We are unprofitable servants, for he felt that he had dealt with his lord as the justice of the case deserved. Indeed, instead of acknowledging any fault, he turned to accusing his lord!

It is even so with false professors. They have no idea that they are hypocrites. The thought does not cross their minds. They have no notion that they are unfaithful. Hint at it and see how they will defend themselves! If they are not living as they ought to do, they claim to be pitied rather than blamedthe blame lies with Providence! It is the fault of circumstances! It is the fault of anybody but themselves. They have done nothing and yet they feel more at ease than those who have done everything. They have taken the trouble to dig in the earth and hide their talent and they as good as askWhat more do you want? Is God so exacting as to expect me to bring more to Him than He gave me? I am as grateful and prayerful as God makes mewhat more will He require?

There is, you see, no bowing in the dust with a sense of imperfection, but an arrogant casting upon God of all blame and this, too, under the pretense of honoring His Sovereign Grace! Ah me, that men should be able to torture the Truth of God into such presumptuous falsehood! Mark well that the verdict of justice, at last, may turn out to be the very opposite of that which we pronounce upon ourselves. He who proudly thinks himself profitable shall be found unprofitable and he who modestly judges himself to be unprofitable may, in the end, come to hear his Master say, Well done, good and faithful servant.

So little are we able, through the defects of our conscience, to form a right estimate of ourselves, that we frequently reckon ourselves to be rich and increased in goods and having need of nothing when, indeed, we are naked and poor and miserable. Such was the case with this unfaithful servanthe wrapped himself up in the conceit that he was even more just than his lord and had an argument to plead which he thought would exonerate him from all blame. It should give rise to much searching of heart when we notice what this unprofitable servant did, or, rather, what he did not do. He carefully deposited his capital where no one was able to find it and steal itand that was the end of his service.

We ought to observe that he did not spend that talent upon himself, or use it in business for his own benefit. He was not a thief, nor in any way did he misappropriate moneys placed under his charge. In this he excels many who profess to be the servants of God and yet live only to themselves. What little talent they have is used in their own business and never upon their Lords concerns. They have the power of getting money, but their money is not made for Christsuch an idea never occurs to them. Their efforts are all for themselves, or, to use other words to express the same thingfor their families.

Yonder is a man who has the gift of eloquent speech and he uses it, not for Christ, but for himself, that he may win popularity; that he might arrive at a respectable position. The one end and objective of his most earnest speech is to bring grist to his own mill and gain to his own estate. Everywhere this is to be seen among professors, that they are living to themselvesthey are not adulterers or drunks, far from itneither are they thieves or spendthrifts. They are decent, orderly, quiet sort of people but, still, they begin and end with self. What is this but to be an unprofitable servant? What is a servant to me if he works hard for himself and does nothing for me?

A professing Christian may toil till he becomes a rich man, an alderman in the city, a Lord Mayor, a member of Parliament, a millionairebut what does that prove? Why, that he could work and did work well for himself and if all this while he has done little or nothing for Christ, he is all the more condemned by his own success! If he had worked for his Lord as he worked for himself, what might he not have accomplished? The unprofitable servant in the parable was not so bad as that and yet he was cast into outer darkness. What, then, will become of some of you? Furthermore, the wicked servant did not go and misspend his talent. He did not waste it in self-indulgence and wickedness as the prodigal son did, who spent his substance in riotous living.

Oh no, he was a much better man than that! He would not waste a halfpenny! He was all for saving and running no risks. The talent was as he received it, only wrapped up in a napkin and hidden in the earthput into a bank, in factbut a bank which gave no interest! He never touched a penny of it for a feast or a revel and, therefore, could not be accused of being a spendthrift with his lords money. In fact, he was superior to those who yield their strength to sin and use their abilities to gratify the guilty passions of themselves and others. I grieve to add that some who call themselves servants of Christ lay out their strength to undermine the Gospel they profess to teach! They speak against the holy name by which they are named and thus they use their talent against their Master.

This man did not do that. He was bad enough in heart for anything, but he had never openly become so base a traitor. He never employed learning in order to raise needless doubts, or to resist the plain doctrines of the Word of God. This has been reserved for Divines of these latter daysdays which produce monsters unknown to less educated times. This mans talent had not been wasted under his handit was as he had received it and he, therefore, reckoned he had been faithful. Ah, but this is not what Christ calls faithfulnessjust to stay where we are! If you think you have gifts and only keep what you have, without obtaining more, it will be hiding your talent in the earth and keeping it a barren thing. It is not enough to retainyou must advance. The capital may be there, but where is the interest? To be living without aim or purpose beyond that of keeping up your position is to be a wicked and slothful servant, condemned already.

While meditating upon this subject, may we, each one, say to himself, Lord, is it I? His lord called this servant wicked. Is it, then, a wicked thing to be unprofitable? Surely wickedness must mean some positive action! No. Not to do right is to be wicked! Not to live for Christ is to be wicked! Not to be of use in the world is to be wicked! Not to bring glory to the name of the Lord is to be wicked! To be slothful is to be wicked! It is clear that there are many wicked people in the world who would not like to be called so. Wicked and slothfulthese are the two words which are riveted together by the Lord Jesus, whose speech is always wise.

A schoolboy was asked by his master What are you doing, John? He was called up and thought to be quite clear by saying, I was doing nothing, Sir. But his master answered, That is the very thing for which I called you out, for you ought to have been doing the lesson which I set before you. It will be no excuse, at the last, for you to cry, I was doing nothing, Sir. Were not those on the left hand made to depart with a curse upon them because they did nothing? Is it not writtenCurse you Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. He who does nothing is a wicked and slothful servant.

This man was condemned to outer darkness. Notice this! He was condemned to be as he was, for Hell, in one light, may be described as the great Captains saying, As you were. He that is unjust, let him be unjust, still. And he that is filthy, let him be filthy, still. In another world there is permanence of characterenduring holiness is Heaven but continual evil is Hell. This man was outside of the family of his lord. He thought his lord a hard master and so proved that he had no love to him and that he was not really one of his household. He was outside in heart and so his lord said to him, Remain outside. Besides that, he was in the darkhe had wrong notions of his master, for his lord was not an austere and hard man. He did not gather where he had not scattered, nor reap where he had not sown. Therefore his lord said, You are willfully in the dark: abide there in the darkness which is outside.

This man was envious. He could not endure his masters prosperity. He gnashed his teeth at the thought of it. He was sentenced to continue in that mind and so to gnash his teeth forever. This is a dreadful idea of eternal punishment, this permanence of character in an immortal spirit He that is unjust, let him be unjust, still. While the character of the ungodly will be permanent, it will also be more and more developed along its own linesthe bad points will become worse and, with nothing to restrain themevil will become still viler. In the next world, where there are no hindrances from the existence of a Church and a Gospel, the man will ripen to a more hideous maturity of enmity against God and a more horrible degree of consequent misery.

Sorrow is bound up with sinabiding in sinfulness, a man must necessarily abide in wretchednessfor the wicked is like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. What must it be to be forever outside the family of God? Never to be Gods child? Forever in the dark? Never to see the light of holy knowledge and purity and hope? Forever to gnash ones teeth with painful contempt and abhorrence of God, whom to hate is Hell? O for Grace to be made to love Him, whom to love is Heaven! The unprofitable servant had a dreadful wage to take when his master reckoned with him, but who can say that he had not well earned it? He had the due reward of his deeds. O our God, grant that such may not be the lot of any one of us!

II. I must now call your attention to the second textSo likewise you, when you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17:10). This is THE VERDICT OF SELF-ABASEMENT given forth from the heart of servants who had laboriously discharged the full work of the day. This is a part of a parable intended to rebuke all notions of self-importance and human merit.

When a servant has been plowing or feeding cattle, his master does not say to him, Sit down and I will wait upon you, for I am deeply in your debt. No, his master bids him prepare the evening meal and wait upon him. His services are due and, therefore, his master does not praise him as if he were a wonder and a hero. He is only doing his duty if he perseveres from morning light to set of sun and he by no means expects to have his work held up to admiration or rewarded with extra pay and humble thanks. Neither are we to boast of our services, but think little of them, confessing that we are unprofitable servants.

Whatever of pain may have been caused by the first part of the discourse, I trust it will only prepare us the more deeply to enter into the spirit of our second text. Both these texts are engraved on my heart as with an iron pen by a merciless wound inflicted when I was too feeble to bear it. When I was exceedingly ill in the South of France and deeply depressed in spiritso deeply depressed and so sick and ill that I scarcely knew how to liveone of those malicious persons who commonly haunt all public men and especially ministers, sent me anonymously a letter, openly directed to That unprofitable servant, C. H. Spurgeon.

This letter contained tracts directed to the enemies of the Lord Jesus, with passages marked and underlinedwith notes applying them to myself. How many Rabshekahs have, in their day, written to me! Ordinarily I read them with the patience which comes of use and they go to light the fire. I do not look for exemption from this annoyance, nor do I usually feel it hard to bear, but in the hour when my spirits were depressed and I was in terrible pain, this reviling letter cut me to the quick. I turned upon my bed and askedAm I, then, an unprofitable servant? I grieved exceedingly and could not lift up my head or find rest.

I reviewed my life and saw its infirmities and imperfections, but knew not how to put my case till this second text came to my relief and answered as the verdict of my bruised heart. I said to myself, I hope I am not an unprofitable servant in the sense in which this person intends to call me so, but I am assuredly so in the other sense. I cast myself upon my Lord and Master once again with a deeper sense of the meaning of the text than I had felt beforeHis atoning Sacrifice revived me and in humble faith I found rest. By the way, I wonder that any human being should find pleasure in trying to inflict pain upon those who are sick and depressed, yet are there persons who delight to do so. Surely, if there are no evil spirits down below, there are some up above and the servants of the Lord Jesus receive painful proofs of their activity!

Let me, then, if you have felt any pain from the first text, lead you to the point at which I personally arrived when, at last, I could thank God for that letter and feel that it was salutary medicine to my spirit. This which is put into our mouths as a confessionthat we are unprofitable servantsis meant to rebuke us when we think we are somebody and have done something worthy of praise. Our text is meant to rebuke us if we think that we have done enough, that we have borne the burden and heat of the day a long time and have been kept at our post beyond our own watch. If we conclude that we have achieved a fine days work of harvesting and ought to be invited home to rest, the text upbraids us. If we feel an inordinate covetousness after comfort and wish the Lord would give us some present and striking reward for what we have done, the text shames us. This is a proud, unchildlike, unservantlike spirit and it must be put down with a firm hand.

In the first place, in what way can we have profited God? Eliphaz has well said, Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous? Or is it gain to Him that you make your ways perfect? If we have given to God of our substance, is He our debtor? In what way have we enriched Him to whom all the silver and gold belongs? If we have laid our lives out with the devotion of martyrs and missionaries for His sake, what is that to Him, whose Glory fills the heavens and the earth? How can we dream of putting the Eternal in debt to us? The right spirit is to say with David, 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. How can a man place his Maker under an obligation to him? Let us not dote so blasphemously!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we ought to remember that whatever service we have been able to render has been a matter of debt. I hope our morality is not fallen so low that we take credit to ourselves for paying our debts! I do not find men in business priding themselves and saying, I paid a thousand pounds this morning to such an one. Well, did you give it to him? Oh no, it was all owing to him. Is that any great thing? Have we come to such a low state of spiritual morals that we think we have done a great deal when we give to God His due? It is He that made us and not we ourselves. Jesus Christ has bought us, we are not our own, for we are bought with a price.

We have also entered into covenant with Him and given ourselves over to Him voluntarily. Were we not baptized into His name and into His death? Whatever we may do is only what He has a right to claim at our hands from our creation, redemption and professed surrender to Him. When we have persevered in the hard work of plowing till no field is left untilled; when we have done the pleasant work of feeding the sheep and when we have finished by spreading the table of communion for our Lordwhen we have done allwe have done no more than was our duty to have done! Why do we boast, then, or cry for a discharge, or look for thanks?

Over and above this there is the sad reflection that, alas, in all we have done we have been unprofitable through being imperfect. In the plowing there have been baulks; in the feeding of the cattle there have been harshness and forgetfulness; in the spreading of the table the viands have been unworthy of such a Lord as we serve. How must our service appear to Him of whom we read, Behold, He put no trust in His servants and His angels He charged with folly. Can any of you look back upon your service to your Lord with satisfaction? If you can, I cannot say I envy you, for I do not sympathize with you in the least degree, but tremble for your safety!

As for myself, I am compelled to say with solemn truthfulness that I am not content with anything I have ever done. I have half wished to live my life over again, but now I regret that my proud heart allowed me to so wish, since the probabilities are that I should do worse the second time. Whatever Grace has done for me I acknowledge with deep gratitude, but so far as I have done anything myself, I beg pardon for it. I pray God to forgive my prayers, for they have been full of fault. I beseech Him to forgive even this confession, for it is not as humble as it ought to be. I beseech Him to wash my tears and purge my devotions and to baptize me into a true burial with my Savior that I may be quite forgotten in myself and only remembered in Him. Ah, Lord, You know how far we fall short of the humility we ought to feel. Pardon us in this thing. We are, all of us, unprofitable servants, and if You should judge us by the Law we must be cast away.

Once more, we cannot congratulate ourselves at all, even if we have had success in our Lords work, since for all that we have done we are indebted to our Lords abundant Grace. If we had done all our duty, we should not have done anything if His Grace had not enabled us to do it! If our zeal knows no respite, it is He that keeps the fire burning! If our tears of repentance flow, it is He that strikes the rock and fetches the waters from it! If there is any virtue, if there is any praise, if there is any faith, if there is any ardor, if there is any likeness to Christ, we are His workmanship, created by Him and, therefore, to ourselves we dare not take a particle of the praise!

Of Your own have we given unto You, great God! So far as anything has been worth Your accepting, it was Your own beforehand. Therefore the best are still unprofitable servants! If we have special cause of regret because of some evident error, we shall be wise to go in a lowly spirit and confess the fault and then go on doing the work of each day in a plodding, hopeful spirit. Whenever you get distressed because you cannot do what you would. Whenever you see the faultiness of your own service and condemn yourself for it, the best thing is to go and do something more in the strength of the Lord. If you have not served Jesus well up to now, go and do better!

If you make a blunder, do not tell everybody and say that you will never try again, but do two good things to make up for the failure. Say, My blessed Lord and Master shall not be more a loser by me than I can help. I will not so much fret over the past as amend the present and wake up for the future. Brothers and Sisters, try to be more profitable and ask for more Grace. The servants business is not to hide himself in a corner of the field and cry, but to go on plowing. You are not to bleat with the sheep, but feed them and so prove your love to Jesus. You are not to stand at the head of the table and say, I have not spread the table for my Master as well as I could have desired. No? Go and spread it better!

Have courage, you are not serving a hard Master and, though you very properly call yourself an unprofitable servant, be of good cheer, for a gentler verdict shall be pronounced upon you before long. You are not your own judgeeither for good or badanother Judge is at the door and when He comes He will think better of you than your self-abasement permits you to think of yourself. He will judge you by the rule of Grace and not by Law and He will end all that dread which comes of a legal spirit and hovers over you with vampire wings.

III. Thus we have arrived at the third textHis lord said unto him, Well done, you good and faithful servant (Mat. 25:21). I shall not try to preach upon that cheering word, but shall only say a word or two upon it. It is much too grand a text to be treated upon at the end of a sermon. We find the Lord saying to those who had used their talents industriously, Well done, good and faithful servant. This is THE VERDICT OF GRACE. Blessed is the man who shall acknowledge himself to be an unfaithful servantand blessed is the man to whom His Lord shall say, You good and faithful servant.

Observe here that the, Well done, of the Master is given to faithfulness. It is not, Well done, you good and brilliant servant for, perhaps, the man never shone at all in the eyes of those who appreciate glare and glitter. It is not, Well done, you great and distinguished servant for, it is possible that he was never known beyond his native village. He conscientiously did his best with his few things and never wasted an opportunity for faithfully doing good and, thus, he proved himself. The same praise was given to the man with two talents as to his fellow servant with five. Their stations were very different, but their reward was the same. Well done, good and faithful servant, was won and enjoyed by each of them.

Is it not very sweet to think that though I may have only one talent, I shall not, thereby, be debarred from my Lords praise? It is my faithfulness on which He will fix His eyes and not upon the number of my talents! I may have made many mistakes and have confessed my faults with great grief, but He will commend me as He did the woman of whom He said, She has done what she could. It is better to be faithful in the infant school than to be unfaithful in a noble class of young men. It is better to be faithful in a hamlet over two or three score of people than to be unfaithful in a great city parish, with thousands perishing in consequence! It is better to be faithful in a cottage meeting, speaking of Christ Crucified to 50 villagers than to be unfaithful in a great building where thousands congregate.

I pray you are faithful in laying out all that you are and have for God. As long as you live, whatever faults you have, be not half-hearted or double-minded, but be faithful in intent and desire. This is the point of the Judges praisethe servants faithfulness. This verdict was given of Sovereign Grace. The reward was not according to the work, for the servant had been faithful in a few things, but he was made ruler over many things. The verdict itself is not after the rule of works, but according to the law of Grace! Our good works are evidences of Grace within us! Our faithfulness, therefore, as servantswill be the evidence of our having a loving spirit towards our Masterevidence, therefore, that our heart is changed and that we have been made to love Him for whom once we had no affection.

Our works are the proof of our love and, therefore, they stand as evidence of the Grace of God. God first gives us Grace and then rewards us for it! He works in us and then counts the fruit as our work. We work out our own salvation, because He works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. If He shall ever say, Well done to you and to me it will be because of His own rich Grace and not because of our merits! And, indeed, this is where we must all come and where we must all stay, for the idea that we have any personal merit will soon make us find fault with our Master and His service as being austere and hard.

I have sometimes admired how men who have denied the doctrine of Salvation by Grace, as a matter of theology, have, nevertheless, admitted it in their devotions. They have entered into controversy against it and yet unconsciously they have believed it! An extreme case is that of Cardinal Bellarmine, who was one of the most inveterate enemies of the Reformation and a renowned antagonist of the teaching of Martin Luther. I will quote from one of his works (Inst. Do Justification, Lib. v., c. 1). He says, in summing up, On account of the uncertain nature of our own works and the danger of vain-glory, it is the safest course to place our whole trust in the mercy and loving kindness of God.

You have said well, O Cardinal! And since the safest course is that which we would choose, we will place our whole trust in the mercy and loving kindness of God! It is reported and, I believe on excellent authority, that this great man who had, all his life, been crying up salvation by works, when dying, breathed a prayer in Latin, the translation of which would be something like thisI beseech God, who weighs not our merits, but graciously pardons our offenses, that He would receive me among His saints and His elect. Is Saul, also, among the Prophets? Does Bellarmine, at the last, pray like a Calvinist? Such a case makes one hope that many others may be saved in an apostate church! Thank God many are a great deal better than their creed and in their hearts believe what, as polemical theologians, they deny. However this may be, I know that if I am saved or rewarded it must be of Grace alone, for I can have no other hope. As for those who have done much for the Church, we know that they will disclaim all praise, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry and give You meat; or thirsty and give You drink? All the Lords faithful servants will sing, Non nobis domine. Not unto us. Not unto us!

Lastly, Brothers, with what infinite delight will Jesus fill our hearts if, through Divine Grace, we are happy enough to hear Him say, Well done, good and faithful servant. Oh, if we shall hold on to the end despite the temptations of Satan and the weakness of our nature and all the entanglements of the world! Oh, if we can keep our garments unspotted from the world, preaching Christ according to our measure of ability and winning souls for Him, what an honor it will be! What bliss to hear Him say, Well done! The music of these two words will have Heaven in them to us. How different it will be from the verdict of our fellow men who are often finding fault with this and that, though we do our best. We never could please them, but we have pleased our Lord!   
Men were always misinterpreting our words and misjudging our motives, but He sets all right by saying, Well done! Little will it matter, then, what all the rest have saidneither the flattering words of friends nor the harsh condemnations of enemies will have any weight with us when He says, Well done! Not with pride shall we receive that eulogium, for we shall reckon ourselves, even then, to have been unprofitable servants. But oh how we shall love Him for setting such an estimate upon the cups of cold water we gave to His disciples and the poor broken service we tried to render Him! What condescension to call that well done, which we feel was so ill done!

I pray Gods servants here, who, this morning first began with searching themselves and then went on to confess their imperfections, will now close by rejoicing in the fact that if we are believing in Christ Jesus and are really consecrated to Him, we shall conclude this life and begin the next with that blessed verdict of, Well done! Mind, however, that you are those who are doing all and are faithful. I hear some people speak against self-righteousness, to whom I would say, You need not say much about that matter, for it does not concern you, since you have no righteousness to be proud of.

I hear persons speak against salvation by good works who are in no danger of falling into that error, since good works and their lives have long parted company. What I do admire is to see a man like Paul who lived for Jesus and was ready to die for Him, yet saying, at the close of his life, But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Go on, Brothers and Sisters, and think not of resting till your days work is done. Serve God with all your might! Do more than the Pharisees who hope to be saved by their zeal. Do more than your brethren expect of you and then, when you have done all, lay it at your Redeemers feet with this confession, I am an unprofitable servant. It is to those who blend faithfulness with humility and ardor with self-abasement that Jesus will say, Well done, good and faithful servant: enter you into the joy of your Lord.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1635 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ONLY TRUST HIM! ONLY TRUST HIM!   
NO. 1635

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JUNE 26, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that,   
as they went, they were cleansed.   
Luke 17:12-14.**

SEVERAL interesting topics might fairly be found in these verses. We see here the abounding fruit of sin, for here were 10 lepers in a group and the abundance of Divine power to meet it, for they were all cleansed. So, also, we see how Christ must come first and ceremonies secondfirst the work of Graceand then the outward showing of it. The Lords tenderness toward outcasts, His attention to prayers from a distance and His regard for the ceremonial Law so long as it was in force, might, each one, yield an instructive meditation. I have, however, only one thought which I wish to bring under your notice and to press upon you, perhaps, almost to repetition and monotony. That thought I would engrave as with an iron pen upon the hearts and minds of all here present who desire to find eternal salvation. May the Holy Spirit imprint it upon every living soul!

These 10 lepers were required by the Savior to perform an act of faith in Him before they had the slightest evidence in themselves that He had worked a good work upon them. Before they began to feel their foul blood cleansedbefore the horrible dryness of leprosy had yielded to healthy perspirationthey were to go towards the house in which the priest lived to be examined by him and to be pronounced clean. They were to exhibit faith in Christ Jesus power to heal them by going to exhibit themselves as healed, though as yet they were in the same condition as before! They were to start to the place where they should be examined by the priest, believing that Jesus had healed them, or would heal them, though, as yet, they had no internal evidence, whatever, that their flesh would become as that of a little child!

This is the point I wish to dwell uponthat the Lord Jesus Christ bids sinners believe in Him and trust their souls to Him, though they may not yet discern in themselves any work of His Grace! Just as these men were lepers and nothing but lepers, so you may be sinners and nothing but sinnersand yet you are bid to exhibit faith in Jesus Christ while you are just what you are! As these men were to start straight away to the priest with all their leprosy white upon them and to go there as if they felt they were already healed, so are you, with all your sinnership upon you and your sense of condemnation heavy on your soul, to believe in Jesus Christ just as you are and you shall find everlasting life on the spot!

This is my point and it is of the first importance. Sinners, as sinners, are to believe in Jesus for everlasting life! The voice to each one of them is, Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you life. Now, first, I shall notice what signs are commonly looked for by unconverted men as reasons for believing in Christ, which, indeed, are no reasons at all! Then, secondly, I shall try to show what is the real ground and reason for faith in Christ. And, thirdly, what will be the issue of a faith in Christ similar to that of the lepers.

I. First, then, I say that we are to believe in Jesus Christto trust Him to heal us of the great disease of sinthough as yet we may have about us no sign or token that He has worked any good work upon us. We are not to look for signs and evidences within ourselves before we venture our souls upon Jesus. The supposition is a soul-destroying error and I will try to expose it by showing WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT ARE COMMONLY LOOKED FOR BY MEN. One of the most frequent is a consciousness of great sin and a horrible dread of Divine wrath leading to despair. Strange to say, we constantly meet with persons who say, I could believe in Jesus Christ if I felt more burdened by a sense of sin. I could trust Him if I were driven more entirely to despondency and to despair. But I am not depressed enough! I am not brokenhearted enough! I am sure I am not brought low enough and, therefore, I cannot trust Christ.

Strange notion, that if the night were darker we should see better! Strange idea, that if we were nearer death we should have better hope of life! Now, my Friend, you are speaking and acting in distinct disobedience to Christ, for He would have you trust Himself, not on the ground of your feeling much or little, or on the ground of your feeling anything at all, but simply because you are sick and He has come to heal you and is abundantly able to work your cure. If you say, Lord, I cannot trust You unless I feel this or that, then you, in effect, say, I can trust my own feelings, but I cannot trust Gods appointed Savior. What is this but to make a god out of your feelings and a savior out of your inward griefs?

Is your own heart to save you by its dark insinuations against Divine love? Is unbelief, after all, to bring you salvation because you refuse to believe your God? And despair, wicked despair, which gives the lie to God is that to be trusted in and not the Savior whom God has sent into the world to save sinners? Is there, then, a new Gospel, and does it run, He that denies the power of Jesus and despairs of His love shall be saved? You know that Jesus justifies the ungodly and cleanses the wicked from their sin through His precious bloodand though you know this to be true, you sayI cannot trust the Crucified. I cannot rely upon His full Atonement unless I feet my guilt to be unpardonable and disbelieve my God.

I pray that you may never feel as you foolishly think you ought to feel, for feelings of despair dishonor the Lord and vex His Spiritand certainly cannot be good for you. It comes to thisyou are making a god of your despair and a Christ out of your horrorsand so you are setting up an antichrist in the place where Christ, alone, should be! Come, young Friend, though you have not been terrified and alarmed and heart-broken to the extent of some, will you trust Christ with your soul and ask no questions? I pray you, trust Jesus once and for all

*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.*

That is the point. Can you trust Jesus? for that is what He bids you do. How strange it seems that anyone should raise a question about trusting HIM! How insane and insulting to be willing to trust our feelings and not trust the Savior!

These 10 lepers felt no change whatever worked upon them when Jesus bade them go off to be examined by the priest, yet away they went, and as they went they were made whole! Trust Jesus Christ just as you are, without those feelings which you have supposed to be necessary as a sort of preparation! Trust Him at once and follow Himand He will make you whole before you have taken many steps in the path of faith and obedience! O Lord God, lead all my hearers and readers to trust Your Son at once!

Many other persons think that they must, before they can trust Christ, experience quite a blaze of joy. Oh, says one, I heard a Christian say that when he found the Savior he was so happy that he did not know how to contain himself and he sang, like a whole band of music in one

*Happy day, happy day,*

*When Jesus washed my sins away.*   
Oh that I could be as full of joy as these happy day people! Just so. But what mischief will you make out of that? Are you going to find evil in our delights? Will you feed your unbelief on the joy of the Lord? What strange perversity! Why, you say, must I not be happy before I can believe in Christ? What? What? Must you have the joy before you exercise the faith? How unreasonable! Because we tell you that such-and-such a root produces a sweet fruit, will you say that you must have the fruit before you will accept the root? Surely that is bad reasoning!

We who have experienced this joy came to Christ in order to obtain it and did not wait until we found it, or else we should have waited until now! We came to Jesus just as we weresome of us were very wretched, but we came just as we then were and trusted Christ and were made whole. Then followed joy and peace, but if we had waited till we felt joy and peace before we came, we should have been standing out against the Gospel plan which is that men are to trust the Savior before they feel the slightest benefit from Him. O Sinner, is not this commonsense? Must we not take medicine before we are cured by it? Must we not eat bread before it removes our hunger? Must we not open our eyes before we see? Before the Lord Jesus has either comforted you or healed you, consciously, you are to come and do just what He bids you and trust in Him to save you. Neither the gloom of horror nor the blaze of delight is to be looked for before faith! Faith is to precede all and that faith is a simple, humble reliance upon Christ.

We have known others who have expected to have a text impressed upon their minds. A kind of superstition has grown up that a special Scripture must, somehow or other, hover over the mind and continue there, so that you cannot get rid of itand then you may hope that you are saved! In old families there are superstitions about white birds coming to a window before a death and I regard with much the same distrust the more common superstition that if a text continues upon your mind day after day you may safely conclude that it is an assurance of your salvation. I hope I have never taught you to draw any such a conclusion! Far be it from me to assist you into a confidence which has so questionable a foundation!

The Spirit of God often applies Scripture with power to the soul, but this fact is never set forth as the rock for us to build upon. Will you find anything in the Bible to support the supposition that the vivid recollection of a text is a seal of conversion? It has often happened that some Word of God does greatly comfort the soul, but why should you demand the same? Have you any right to say, I will not believe Gods Word unless He impresses it upon me? Is it a lie, then? No, it is true, you say. Remember, if it is not true, an impression upon your mind would not make it true and if it is true, why do you not believe it? If it is true, accept it! If there is any force about a promise, pray God to make you feel its force and power! You ought to feel its force and power, but if you do not, sin lies at your door.

As a reader of the Scriptures you must not fall into the idea that you are to wait till some Scripture burns its way into your soul. You must read attentively and believe what the Lord God says to you. Furthermore, I would have you remember it is not reading the Scripture that saves you it is believing in Christ. What did Christ, Himself, say? He said to the Bible readers of His day, You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; but you will not come unto Me that you might have life. Good as the searching of Scripture is, it is nothing without coming to Christ! You will only read your own condemnation in the Bible if you remain out of Christ. Even the Bible, itself, may be made into a stumbling block if you substitute Bible-reading for closing in with Christ and putting your trust in Him. Your immediate business is to trust Jesus and no measure of reading will compensate for neglect of faith.

What if no special text of Scripture were ever laid home to your heart at all, yet here it stands, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. That is your business, my dear Hearer, if you are to get peace at once! And I earnestly hope that some of you are going to get it before this sermon is over. I have asked your souls of my God and I have got them for a prey tonight. They shall be Davids spoil and you shall be led in chains of Grace to Jesus! Who among you will put His trust in Jesus? For, if you do so, you shall surely find eternal salvation the moment you believe in His dear name!

There is another way in which some men try to get off believing in Christ and that is, they expect an actual conversion to be manifest in them before they will trust the Savior. Now, understand that Christ has worked salvation in no man who is unconverted. There must be a perfect turning round of usa complete conversion from sin to holiness. That is salvationnot a preparation for salvation. Conversion is the manifestation of Christs healing power. But you are not to have this before you trust Himyou are to trust Him for this very thing. When a man with a disease goes to an eminent physician, does he say, Doctor, I will trust you with my case when I have reached a certain stage? No, says the physician, if you have reached that state you will be in a fair way of healing and you wont need me. Your wisest plan is to go to your physician just as you areand if you can be sure that he is an infallible healer, just put yourself into his hands as if you knew nothing and he knew everythingand as if you would not have a will or way in it, but would leave yourself entirely with him.

That is the thing to do with the Lord Jesus, the Infallible Physician of the souls of men! Why, you poor wretched sinner, you say, I am not a saint. I cannot be saved. Who said you were a saint? It is Christs work to make you into a saint! Oh, but I do not repent as I should. It is Christs work to make you repent as you should and to Him you must come for repentance! Oh, but my heart wont break. It is Christ who is to break your heartnot you who are to break it and then come to Him when it is broken. Come to Jesus just as you are, with your hard, stony, senseless heartand trust that and everything else to His saving power! I do not seem to even have a strong desire, says one. Christ Himself gives every spiritual desire by His Holy Spirit. He is a Savior that begins the alphabet of mercy at A. He does not ask you to get as far as B, C, D and then promise to meet youHe begins at the beginning.

The good Samaritan, when he found the man beaten by the thieves, went to where he was. That is what Jesus does. He does not say, Now, then, you wounded man, get up and come to Me, and I will pour the oil and wine into you. No, but He goes where the wounded one lies in utter helplessness, stoops over him, removes his rags, cleanses his wounds, pours in the oil and wine and lifts him up and bears him to the house of mercy. Poor soul! My Master is not a half Savior, but a whole one! And if you are lying at the gates of death, hard by the doors of Hell, He is as able to save you as if you were sitting on the doorstep of Heaven! Just where you are and as you are, trust Christ to save you and you shall be saved! Do not look for conversion first, but expect it as the result of faith.

We have known some who have had a very curious idea which I can hardly put into words, namely, that if they were to be saved they would experience some very singular sensation. They could believe in Christ if they felt in a mysterious fashion! It is rather difficult to understand people, but when I have been talking to some enquirers I have thought that they expected even a physical sensationa sensation within their bodies. I remember one saying to me, Sir, I was quite sure I was saved, for I felt so light. Poor simpleton, what does it matter whether you felt light or heavy? What has that to do with it? Perhaps you were light-headed, or half out of your mind with absurd excitement. Beware of such nonsense! To feel light may be interpreted into being weighed in the balances and found wantingit is a sensation which may frighten as much as console.

Oh, says one, but I felt so singular. Yes, and many who are now in Bedlam could say the same. What does it matter what you felt? It is not feeling that will save you! Believing on Jesus will bring you the blessings of Grace, but strange feelings may be produced by what you have eaten, or by the weather, or by hysteria, or a hundred other things! Do you not know that when politics are being discussed, or when some other subject is under dispute, an earnest orator will often stir men with excitement till their flesh creeps? But what of that? Excitement does not save anybody! Many are melted to tears by a novel or a play, but of what benefit is that? You may be moved with religious excitement and half the emotion may be purely physicalthere may be nothing of the Grace of God in it.

The wiser way is to sit down calmly and say, Here is Gods way of salvationsalvation through His crucified Son, Jesus Christ. And He has promised that if I trust His Son, He will save me from sinning, make a new man of me and heal me of my spiritual diseases. I will trust Him, for I am sure that the witness of God is true. By that simple and deliberate act of faith you are saved! The power to believe your God is the evidence that the cure has begun and begun well! If you have, indeed, trusted Him, Jesus has undertaken your case and He will save you! The very fact that you can and do believe has, within it, the essential force by which you will be delivered from the alienation of your mind. He that believes God is no longer an enemy to Him. Those whom we trust, we soon learn to love. This, you see, demands no singular sensation or excitementthis is plain and clear enough.

But must we not be born again? asks one. Yes, truly, and he that believes in Christ is born again. Though as yet he knows it not, the first mark of life is within his soul, for the first sure token of spiritual life is trusting Jesus Christ, alone. The best evidence is not trusting marks, signs, evidences, inward feelings, impressions and so onbut just getting out of that and trusting Jesus! There lies the essence of the saving changethe getting from self to the Lord God in Christ Jesus!

A certain mariner has a fine anchor, one of the best constructed anchors ever used in the navy. He has it on board his ship and yet it is not a pennyworth of use to him! While he has it on board his ship, it does not answer the purpose of an anchor! His vessel drifts with the anchor on board. He drags it out upon the deck and looks at it. What an anchor! Would not that hold in the day of storm? He admires his anchor as if it were a mass of gold! The winds howl and the waves roar, but he feels safe with his anchor on board. Fool! This anchor is of no use to you while you can see it. A ships anchorage cannot be in the ship, itself!

Suppose I hang the anchor from the side of the vessel. It is of no use there! What must you do with it? Fling it overboard! Let it down into the deep, even to the bottom. It is gone! You cannot see where it is. All right! That will do. Now, Soul, fling your anchor of trust overboard! Do not let it hang to your feelings, or to your impressions, or to anything that is in you, but let it go overboard, deep into the waters of infinite loveand let it get a grip on Jesus! Outside of you, your hope must be, for as long as your confidence is within you, or has any dependence upon yourself, it is like an anchor on board which can only increase the weight of the ship, but certainly cannot help it in the day of storm. There is the Truth of God. God grant you Grace to accept it.

II. And now, secondly, and as briefly as I can, I want to bring forward WHAT THE REASON IS FOR OUR BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST. What reason have I, as a sinner, for trusting myself with Jesus Christ? No reason whatever within ourself need be looked for. The warrant for our believing Christ lies in thisfirst, there is Gods witness concerning His Son, Jesus Christ. God, the Everlasting Father, has set forth Christ to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sin of the whole world. God the Father says to men, I am able to forgive you justly through the death and righteousness of My Son. Trust Me and I will save you.

What do you need more than that? He that believes not has made God a liar because he has not believed His witness concerning His Son. Why, surely, if God declares a thing, you do not need further evidence! Let God be true and every man a liar. What can be firmer than the voice of God, who cannot lie? Beloved Hearers, I feel as if I really ought not to bring any other evidence before you. It looks so like insulting the Lord by trying to defend Him, as if His perfect Truth needed my testimony to support it! Angels never doubt God. Those bright and glorious beings never suspect their Maker. Worms of the dust! Worms of the dust, how can you doubt the God that made you? Oh, let it not be so! And when His testimony is that He is a God ready to pardon the guilty, waiting to forgive all those that trust His Son, why should we doubt such a gracious declaration? My Soul, I charge you, trust your Savior and raise no further question, but let the matter be assured and established within you!

The next warrant for our believing is Jesus Christ, Himself. He bears witness on earth as well as the Father and His witness is true. Consider who this Christ is whom we are bid to trust. Look at His Person. He is God, very God of very God. Can we doubt Him? He is perfect Man and He has taken perfect manhood upon Himself for our sakes. Can we doubt Him? He has lived a perfect life. When did He ever lie? Who can charge Him with falsehood? He has died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. And God has accepted the Sacrifice of His dear Son. What surer proof of His truthfulness can He give us than His death for us? O trembler, why will you refuse your confidence to One so worthy of it? Can you doubt Calvary? Will you despise the Cross?

Will you say, I need some other reason for trusting Christ besides His own Person and His finished work? I feel almost ashamed to be pleading for such a thing as this! Tell me when my Lord was ever false. O sons of men, tell me when once He refused to receive a sinner that came to Him! You know that He is risen from the dead and that He has gone into Heaven and sits, now, at the right hand of God and will shortly come. And do you dare treat Him as a mere pretender? Can you not trust Him? Can you dare distrust Him? Do you need signs and wonders over and above those which are in Himself? If one should rise from the dead you would not believe, if you do not believe Jesus, for you have more than Moses and the Prophets when you have Christ, Himself, risen from the dead! Will you not trust Him?

I would like to get you by the hand, my Brothers and Sisters, and put it personally to youDo you mean it, that you suspect my Savior and cannot trust your soul with Him? Do you mean it? No, with tears I entreat you, do not treat Him so badly, but cast your soul on Him at this instant and believe Him just as you are and He will save you! He will not run back from His word, but He will wash out your guilt in His own blood if you will consent to be cleansed. Still, to put this in another shape, you want to know why you are to believeyour warrant for believing lies in the fact that God commands you to believe! He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

And this commandment we have received from our Masterthat we preach this Gospel unto every creature under Heavenand we preach it in His name, commanding you in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that you believe in Him! This Divine command is reason enough for you. If God commands you to do it, you need not ask, May I do it? Nobody needs permission to keep the Light of Godthe command includes a permit! When the Law of the Gospel comes from God, Himself, dear Hearer, what is there to do but to obey it and believe at once? The door is open, enter! The feast is spread, eat! The fountain is filled, wash!

Moreover, there is the promise made to you and to every creature, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. He that believes in Him is not condemned. Do you hear that? He that believes in Him has everlasting life. He has eternal life, he has it now! These are promises rich and free for you. What more do you want? Oh, I know not what more I can saywhen Jesus commands you, when Jesus invites youhow can you stand back? O blessed Spirit, make this plain to men and lead them to believe!

I will only add this one more thingI dare say these poor lepers believed in Jesus because they had heard of other lepers whom He had cleansed. Now, here stands one before you, a representative of many more in this place, who, if this were a fit time, would stand up and say the same. I came to Jesus full of sin, guilty and lost, with a hard heart and a heavy spiritand I looked to Him, trusting Him, alone, to save meand He has saved me! He has changed my nature. He has blotted out my sin and He has made me love Him and love all that is good and true and generous, for His sake. It is not I, even I, that am left, alone, to tell you, but, as I have said, there are thousands in this Tabernacle, at this very hour, upon whom the same miracle of Divine mercy has been worked! Therefore trust my Lord Jesus and you shall feel the same miracle worked upon you!

Where are you, Friend, you who need so much persuading for your own good? If I have money to give away, I do not find that I have to persuade anybody to have it! Jingle a guinea and what ears men have! How soon they will rush where the coin gives forth its golden notes! Give bread away in a cold winter, or even a little souphow the poor will crowd to get it! But when it is, Trust Jesus and your sin shall be forgiven you, and your nature shall be changed, and you shall be saved from sinning, and you shall be made pure and holy, oh, my Master, what are they thinking that they need calling so often? Men not only require calling, they need compelling to come in

*Dear Savior, draw reluctant hearts!   
To You let sinners fly   
And take the bliss Your love imparts   
And drink, and never die!*

III. I must now close with the third point which shall not occupy many minutes. It is this, WHAT IS THE ISSUE OF THIS KIND OF FAITH THAT I HAVE BEEN PREACHING? This doctrine of, only trust Jesuswhat does it lead to? This trusting in Jesus without marks, signs, evidences, tokenswhat is the result and outcome of it? The first thing that I have to say about it is thisthat the very existence of such a faith as that in the soul is evidence that there is already a saving change! Oh, you say, I do not see that. How can it prove that I am a new man because I trust myself with Christ? Consider a littleit will be an evidence of a saving change already worked, for it will show that you have come to be obedient to Jesusand obedient upon a matter which your proud will has long struggled against.

Every man, by nature, kicks against simply trusting in Christ. And when, at last, he yields to the Divine method of mercy, it is a virtual surrender of his own will, the ending of rebellion, the establishment of peace. Faith is obedience! Faith is the evidence that the warfare has been ended by unconditional surrender! They said to Jesus in olden times, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? And He answered, This is the work of Godthe most godlike work that you can dothat you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent. It is even soin one sense faith is not a work at alland in another sense it is the most grand of all works! Here is where God and you are at issuethis is the central point of the quarrel! You want to be saved by something in yourself, but God says that He will save you if you trust in Christ!

Now, if you trust Christ just as you are, it will be an evidence that you have been made obedient to God and so obedient that a complete, deepseated, radical renewal of your nature has evidently taken place. It will be an evidence, also, that you are humble, for it is pride that makes men need to do something, or to be something in their own salvation. Or to be saved in some wonderful way that they may tell other people how wonderfully they were saved. When you are willing to be saved like a poor, goodfor-nothing sinner that you are, then you are already saved from pride! I will not compliment youyou are a good-for-nothing wretch of a sinner and if you will trust Jesus, as a man must do who truly bears that characterit will prove that you are humble and this will be good evidence that a change has passed over your spirit!

Again, faith in Jesus will be the best evidence that you are reconciled to God, for the worst evidence of your enmity to God is that you do not like Gods way of salvation. You so much dislike God that you will not have Heaven on Gods terms! You, the sinner, are so much at war with God that you will go to Hell rather than be saved in Gods way! That is what it comes to. And when you give that up and say, Lord, as long as I can be made wholeas long as I can be made to love YouI am willing to be saved, there will be evidence of a great change in you. When you cry, Lord, I will be saved in Your way and I will, therefore, trust Christ as you have bid me, then God and you are reconciled upon a point of the chief importance! There is no battle between you, now, for you are of one mind about trusting Christ. God has trusted His honor in Christs hands and you are trusting your soul in His hands, so that God and you are now agreed to honor Jesus. The moment you have trusted Christ, that simple thing becomes, in itself, a distinct admission and indisputable proof that a great change has been worked in your relation to God and in your feelings in reference to Him.

Now, mark you, before long, sooner or later, you will become delightfully conscious of the fact that you are saved. Many a man is saved and, for a time, he questions the truth of the gracious work. But in due time the blessing is made clear to him. When a man trusts Jesus as these 10 lepers did and acts upon His trust, good always comes of it. See the 10 men! They are going towards the priest though they have not yet felt that they are healed! They are acting upon Christs authority and He will not make fools of them, for they that trust in Him shall not be ashamed nor confounded! They must start on their walk before they feel the healing, but as they are going they shall feel it! And you, too, trusting Christ without any sense of any good thing, shall not be long before you shall feel His blessed power upon your heart.

I wish to speak my own experience simply to help those who are coming to Jesus. While I was coming to Christ, I did not know that I was coming. And when I looked to Christ, I scarcely knew whether it was the right sort of look or not. But when I felt, at last, that Jesus had healed me, then I knew what I had done. Many a blessing God has given me as to which I have not found out that I had it till some time after my reception of it! I have read the feelings of certain good men and I have said, I wish I felt like they and some time after, when I looked back, I perceived that I was actually moving in their orbit and passing through the same experience!

Many a man wishes he was humble and he is humble because he does not think he is humble! Many a person sighs, I wish I had a tender heart, but I am sure that his heart is tender because he mourns its hardness! He longs to be deeply sensitive before the Lord and it is clear that he has a tenderness which he does not, himself, recognize. His ideal of tenderness is very high and properly soand, therefore, he dreads falling short of it. O my dear Friend, if you trust Jesus in the dark, you shall one day enter into the light! And if you never should enjoy comfort, you would still be safeif all the way between this place and Heaven you should never have a consciousness of being savedyet if you have trusted Christ, you must and shall be saved, for He cannot possibly allow faith in Him to be exercised in vain!

Before long, if you trust Jesus, you shall know His love. Trust Him as you sink and you shall swim. Trust Him as you feel yourself dying and you shall live. If you trust Him before you feel any work of Grace upon you, you shall soon discover that there was a work upon you, though you discerned it not. If you trust the Lord, you are already the subject of a Divine power, for nothing short of Omnipotent Grace could have led you to believe and live! The state and act of faith are simplicity itself, but to bring us into that simplicity, God, Himself, must new create us. To put all in one, if you are ready to come to Christ and trust Him without any miracles, signs, or evidences, but will simply trust Him, alone, you have within you a power which will carry you through life and preserve you in holiness even to the end.

This morning I spoke about Davids encouraging himself in God. [ No. 1606. ZiklagOr David Encouraging Himself in God.] When Ziklag was burnt, his wives taken captive and his men talked of stoning him, David fell back on God alone. This is a high attainment and yet it is one which has its parallel in the very dawn of faith in the sinner. It is a grand start in life for you, a poor sinner, to begin by trusting Christ, alone, saying, I, without anything good in me whatever, without anything that I can lay hold of as a hope for me, do cast myself, whether I sink or swim, upon Christ Jesus the Savior of sinners. And I if I perish, I perish.

This is a glorious beginning! To many a saintly life, such a faith in the Lord, alone, has been a crowning act, and yet you, poor Sinner, may exercise this same faith while yet you are a babe in Christ! You will often have to trust in this fashion in future life and, therefore, it is well to begin as you will have to keep on. You will be brought in business, in the family and in the various trials of life, into such a condition that you will have to exercise a faith just of the same sort as that which you begin with. I would, therefore, have you learn the lesson while you are young. You will have to say, Though I am weakness, itself, and poverty, itself, and do not see how I may be provided for, yet as the ravens and the sparrows are fed, so shall I be. And therefore I cast my nakedness upon God for clothing, my hunger upon God for food and my very life I cast upon Him that He may preserve it to me between the jaws of death.

This is grand faith and you must begin there, for if you do not, you have not begun to build on the Rock. Your first course must be the live Rock, or else all will be insecure. To begin well is half the battlemind that you get a foundation which can never be movedfor life has many trials, and woe to the man whose foundation fails him. This is grand faith to die with as well as to live with. The curtains are drawn and the light of the sun is shut out. The voices of friends begin to fail, the ears are dull and the eye-strings break. My Soul, you are now about to launch into the unseen world! What will you do now? What, indeed, but faint into the arms of your Father and your God!   
Oh, my dear Hearer, if you have learned to trust, at the very first because of what Jesus is, and not because of what you are, then you will know how to die! Standing there, in the prospect of the great accountor rather, lying there, upon the bed in prospect of the Lords comingfears will come, doubts will come and terrors will come if you are looking within, or looking back upon your past life and trying to find a reliance. But if you can say, My Savior, into Your hands I commit my spirit: my naked soul I put into Your pierced hands, again, then may you breathe your last in peace, knowing whom you have believed and being persuaded that He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him until that day! When John Hyatt lay a-dying, one of his friends said, Mr. Hyatt, can you now trust your soul with Jesus? Man, he said, trust Him with one soul? That is nothing! I could trust Him with a million souls if I had them! I know that He is able to save all who trust Him.

I want you to begin, then, as these poor lepers didby just taking Christ at His wordand going your way in the strength of that word before you feel any hopeful change within. In this fashion, when you come to die, you may look out for Glory and expect it, though the brilliance has not yet transfigured you! You may look out for the eternal crown; look out for the harp; look out for the face of the Well-Beloved and the bliss unspeakableand expect them even though the clouds gather around you! Before you pass the gates of pearl, or cross the chilly sea, you may enjoy the sight of the Beatific Vision by an unstaggering faith!

Hope that is seen is not hope, but glorious is the faith which sees Him who is invisible and grasps the substance of the things not seen as yet! By this power I even now anticipate the joys of the upper skies. Try, Beloved, to do the same. O for more faith! It will be grand to know all Heaven, though you have not seen it and felt it, because you knew and trusted the Lord of Heaven! Up to now you have found the promise truenow trust the Lord for Glory as once you trusted Him for Graceand you shall find, before long, that His richest promises are sure! God save you, every one of you, Beloved, and may He do so at this very, this very hour, for His dear Sons sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1935 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHERE ARE THE NINE?OR, PRAISE NEGLECTED

NO. 1935

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 20, 1886,   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 7, 1886.

**And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not 10 cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found that returned to give glory to God, except this   
foreigner? And He said to him, Arise,   
go your way: your faith has made you whole.   
Luke 17:15 -19.**

You have often heard the leprosy describedit was a very horrible disease, I should think the worst that flesh is heir to. We ought to be much more grateful than we are that this fell disease is scarcely known in our favored country. You have also heard what an instructive symbol it is in human flesh of what sin is in the human soul, how it pollutes, how it destroys. I need not go into that sad subject. But here was a sight for the Savior10 men that were lepers! A mass of sorrow, indeed! What sights our Lord still sees every day in this sin-defiled world! Not 10 men that are sinners, nor even merely 10 millions are to be found all the world over, but on this earth there are a thousand millions of men diseased in soul! It is a miracle of condescension that the Son of God should set foot in such a lazar house as this.

Yet observe the triumphant Grace of our Lord Jesus to the 10 men that were lepers. It would make a mans fortune, it would crown a man with lifelong fame to heal one leperbut our Lord healed 10 lepers at once! So full a fountain of Grace is He, so freely does He dispense His favor, that the 10 are told to go and show themselves to the priests because they are healedand on the way to the priests they find it is so! None of us can imagine the joy they felt when they perceived that they were healed. Oh, it must have been a sort of new birth to them to find their flesh made fresh as that of a little child! It would not have been amazing if the whole 10 had hurried back and fallen at Jesus feet and lifted up their voices in a tenfold Psalm! The sad thing about it is that nine of them, though they were healed, went on their way to the priests in the coolest possible mannerwe never hear of their returnthey drop out of the story altogether. They have obtained a blessing, they go their way and that is an end of them.

Only one of them, a Samaritan, returned to express his thanks. Misery has strange bedfellows and so the nine lepers of the seed of Israel consorted with an outcast Samaritanand he, strange to tell it, was the only one who, seized by a sudden impulse of gratitude, made his way to his Benefactor, fell down at His feet and began to glorify God!

If you search the world around, among all choice spices you shall scarcely meet with the frankincense of gratitude. It ought to be as common as the dewdrops that hang upon the hedges in the morning but, alas, the world is dry of thankfulness to God! Gratitude to Christ was scarcely enough in His own day! I had almost said it was 10 to one that nobody would praise Him, but I must correct myself a littleit was nine to one! One day in seven is for the Lords worship, but not one man in 10 is devoted to His praise! Our subject is

thankfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. I begin with the point that I have already touched upon, namely, THE SINGULARITY OF THANKFULNESS.   
Here note there are more who receive benefits than ever give praise for them. Nine persons healed, one person glorifying God. Nine persons healed of leprosy, mark you, and only one person kneeling down at Jesus feet and thanking Him for it! If for this surpassing benefit, which might have made the dumb to sing, men only thank the Lord in the proportion of one in 10, what shall I say of what we call Gods common merciesonly common because He is so liberal with them, for each of them is inestimably valuable? Life, health, eyesight, hearing, domestic love, the continuance of friendshipsI cannot attempt a catalog of benefits that we receive every dayand yet is there one man in 10 that praises God for these? A cold, Thank God! is all that is given. Others of us do praise Him for these benefits, but what poor praises! Dr. Watts hymn is sadly true *Hosannas languish on our tongues,   
And our devotion dies.*   
We do not praise the Lord fitly, proportionately, intensely. We receive a continent of mercies and only return an island of praise. He gives us new blessings every morning and fresh ones every eveninggreat is His faithfulnessand yet we let the years roll round and seldom observe a day of praise. Sad is it to see God all goodness and man all ingratitude! The tribe who receives benefits may say, My name is legion, but those who praise God are so few that a child may write them.   
But there is something more remarkable than thisthe number of those who pray is greater than the number of those who praise. For these 10 men that were lepers all prayed. Poor and feeble as their voices had become through disease, yet they lifted them up in prayer and united in cryingJesus, Master, have mercy on us! They all joined in the litany, Lord, have mercy upon us! Christ, have mercy upon us! But when they came to the Te Deum, magnifying and praising God, only one of them took up the note! One would have thought that all who prayed would praise, but it is not so. Cases have been where a whole ships crew, in time of storm, has prayed, and yet none of that crew have sung the praise of God when the storm has become a calm. Multitudes of our fellow citizens pray when they are sick and near to dying, but when they grow better, their praises grow sick unto death! The angel of mercy, listening at their door, has heard no canticle of love, no song of thankfulness. Alas, it is too sadly true that more pray than praise!   
I put it in another shape to you who are Gods peoplemost of us pray more than we praise. You pray little enough, I fear, but praise, where is that? At our family altars we always pray, but seldom praise. In our closets we constantly pray, but do we frequently praise? Prayer is not so heavenly an exercise as praiseprayer is for time, but praise is for eternity! Praise, therefore, deserves the first and highest place, does it not? Let us commence the employment which occupies the celestials. Prayer is for a beggar, but I think he is a poor beggar who does not also give praise when he receives an alms. Praise ought to naturally follow upon the heels of prayer, even when it does not, by Divine Grace, go before it. If you are afflicted, if you lose money, if you fall into poverty, if your child is ill, if chastisement visits you in any form, you begin to pray and I do not blame you for it. But should it be all praying and no praising? Should our life have so much salt and so little sweet in it? Should we get for ourselves so often a drink from the rock of blessing and so seldom pour out a drink offering unto the Lord Most High? Come, let us chide ourselves as we acknowledge that we offer so much more prayer than praise!  
On the same head, let me remark that more obey ritual than ever praise Christ. When Jesus said, Go show yourselves to the priests, off they went, all 10 of them! Not one stayed behind. Yet only one came back to behold a personal Savior and to praise His name. So todayyou will go to Church, you will go to Chapel, you will read a book, you will perform an outward religious action, but oh, how little praising God, how little lying at His feet and feeling that we could sing our souls away for gratitude to Him who has done such great things for us! External religious exercises are easy enough and common enough, but the internal matter, the drawing out of the heart in thankful lovehow scarce a thing it is! Nine obey ritual where only one praises the Lord!   
Once more, to come yet closer home, there are more that believe than there are that praise, for these 10 men did believe, but only one praised the Lord Jesus. Their faith was about the leprosy and, according to their faith, so it was unto them. This faith, though it only concerned their leprosy, was yet a very wonderful faith. It was remarkable that they should believe the Lord Jesus though He did not even say, Be healed, nor speak a word to them to that effect, but simply said, Go show yourselves to the priests. With parched skins and death burning its way into their hearts, they went bravely off in confidence that Jesus must mean to bless them. It was admirable faithand yet none of the nine who thus believed ever came back to praise Christ for the mercy received! I am afraid that there is much of faith, better faith than theirs, which concerns spiritual things which has yet to flower into practical gratitude. Perhaps it blooms late in the year, like the chrysanthemum, but certainly it has not flowered in springtime like the primrose and the daffodil. It is a faith which bears few blossoms of praise!   
I chide myself, sometimes, that I have wrestled with God in prayer, like Elijah upon Carmel, but I have not magnified the name of the Lord like Mary of Nazareth. We do not laud our Lord in proportion to the benefits received! Gods treasury would overflow if the revenue of thanks were more honestly paid. There would be no need to plead for missions and stir up Gods people to self-denial if there were praise at all proportionate to our faith. We believe for Heaven and eternity and yet do not magnify the Lord as we should for earth and time! It is real faith, I trustit is not for me to judge itbut it is faulty in result. Faith was only real in these lepers so far as their leprosy was concerned. They did not believe in our Lords Divinity, or believe for eternal life. So also among ourselves, there are men who get benefits from Christ, who even hope that they are saved, but they do not praise Him. Their lives are spent in examining their own skins to see whether their leprosy is gone. Their religious life reveals itself in a constant searching of themselves to see if they are really healed. This is a poor way of spending ones energies. This man knew that he was healed. He had full assurance upon that point and the next impulse of his spirit was to get back to where Jesus stood who had been his glorious Physician, to fall at His feet and praise Him with a loud voice, glorifying God! Oh, that all my timorous, doubting hearers may do the same!   
I have said enough, I think, upon the scantiness of thanksgiving. Let us go over those points again. More receive benefits than praise God for them. More pray than praise. More obey ritual than praise God with the heart and more believe and receive benefits through faith, than rightly praise the Giver of those benefits.   
II. I have a great deal to say and little time to say it in, therefore, briefly let us note THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE THANKFULNESS. This mans simple act may show the character of praise. It does not take the same shape in everybody. Love to Christ, like living flowers, wears many formsonly artificial flowers are all alike. Living praise is marked by individuality. This man was one of 10 when he was a leper, but he was all alone when he returned to praise God. You can sin in company, you can go to Hell in companybut when you obtain salvation, you will come to Jesus all alone. And when you are saved, though you will delight to praise God with others if they will join you, yet if they will not, you will delight to sing a solo of gratitude! This man quits the company of the other nine and comes to Jesus. If Christ has saved you and your heart is right, you will say, I must praise Him! I must love Him! You will not be kept back by the chilly state of nine out of 10 of your old companions, nor by the worldliness of your family, nor by the coldness of the Church. Your personal love to Jesus will make you speak even if Heaven, earth and sea are all wrapped in silence.   
You have a heart burning with adoring love and you feel as if it were the only heart under Heaven that had love to Christ in it and, therefore, you must feed the heavenly flame. You must indulge its desires, you must express its longings. The fire is in your bones and must have vent. Since there is an individuality about true praise, come, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us praise God, each one, in his own way!

*Oh, may the sweet, the blissful theme,   
Fill every heart and tongue,   
Till strangers love Your charming name,   
And join the sacred song!*

The next characteristic of this mans thankfulness was promptness. He went back to Christ almost immediately, for I cannot suppose the Savior lingered at the village gate for hours that day. He was too busy to be long in one spotthe Master went about doing good. The man was soon back and when you are saved, the quicker you can express your gratitude the better. Second thoughts are best, they say, but this is not the case when the heart is full of love to Christ! Carry out your first thoughts. Do not stop for the second, unless, indeed, your heart is so on fire with heavenly devotion that second ones consume the first! Go at once and praise the Savior. What grand designs some of you have formed of future service for God! What small results have followed! Ah, it is better to lay one brick, today, than to propose to build a palace next year! Magnify your Lord in the present for present salvation. Why should His mercies lie in quarantine? Why should your praises be like aloes which take a century to flower? Why should praise be kept waiting at the door, even for a night? The manna came fresh in the morning, so let your praises rise early! He praises twice who praises at once, but he who does not praise at once never praises.

The next quality of this mans praise was spirituality. We perceive this in the fact that he paused on his way to the priests. It was his duty to go to the priestshe had received a command to do sobut there is a proportion in all things and some duties are greater than others. He thought to himselfI was ordered to go to the priests, but I am healed and this new circumstance affects the order of my duties. The first thing I ought to do is to go back and bear witness to the people, glorifying God in the midst of them all, and falling down at Christs feet. It is well to observe the holy law of proportion. Carnal minds take the ritualistic duty first that which is external outweighs, with them, that which is spiritual. But love soon perceives that the substance is more precious than the shadowand that to bow at the feet of the Great High Priest must be a greater duty than to go before the lesser priests! So the healed leper went first to Jesus. In him the spiritual overrode the ceremonial. He felt that his main duty was to adore in person the Divine Person who had delivered him from his fell disease. Let us go first to Jesus! Let us in spirit bow before HIM. Ah, yes! Come to our services, join in our regular worship, but if you love the Lord, you will need something besides thisyou will pine to get to Jesus, Himself, and tell Him how you love Him! You will long to do something for Him by yourself, by which you can show forth the gratitude of your heart to the Christ of God!

True thankfulness also manifests itself in intensity. Intensity is perceptible in this case. He turned back and with a loud voice glorified God. He could have praised, could he not, in a quieter way? Yes, but when you are just cured of leprosy and your once feeble voice is restored to you, you cannot whisper out your praises! Brothers and Sisters, you know it would be impossible to be coolly proper when you are newly saved! This man, with a loud voice, glorified God! And you, too, feel forced to cry

*Gladly would I sound it out so loud   
That earth and Heaven could hear!*

Some of our converts are very wild, at times, and they grow extravagant. Do not blame them! Why not indulge them? It will not hurt you. We are, all of us, so very proper and orderly that we can afford to have an extravagant one among us now and then. Oh, that God would send more of that sort to wake the Church up that we, also, might all begin to praise God with heart and voice, with soul and substance, with might and main! Hallelujah! My own heart feels the glow!

In true thankfulness, next, there is humility. This man fell down at Jesus feet. He did not feel perfectly in his place until he was lying there. I am nobody, Lord, he seemed to say and, therefore, he fell on his face. But the place for his prostration was, at His feet. I would rather be nobody at Christs feet than everybody anywhere else! There is no place so honorable as down at the feet of Jesus! Ah, to lie there always and just love Him whollyand let self die out! Oh, to have Christ standing over you as the one figure overshadowing your life from this day on and forever! True thankfulness lies low before the Lord.

Added to this there was worship. He fell down at Jesus feet, glorifying God and giving thanks to Him. Let us worship our Savior! Let others think as they like about Jesus, but we will put our finger into the print of the nails and say, My Lord and my God! If there is a God, He is God in Christ Jesus to us. We shall never cease to adore Him who has proved His Godhead by delivering us from the leprosy of sin! All worship be to His supreme majesty!

One thing more about this man I want to notice as to his thankfulness and that is, his silence as to censuring others. When the Savior said, Where are the nine? I notice that this man did not reply. The Master said, Where are the nine? Were there not any found that returned to give Glory to God, except this foreigner? But the adoring stranger did not stand up and say, O Lord, they are all gone off to the priests! I am astonished at them that they did not return to praise You! O Brothers and Sisters, we have enough to do to mind our own business when we feel the Grace of God in our own hearts! If I can only get through my service of praise, I shall have no mind to accuse any of you who are ungrateful. The Master asks, Where are the nine? but the poor healed man at His feet has no word to say against those cruel nine! He is too much occupied with his personal adoration!

III. I have not half done and yet you cannot possibly stay beyond the appointed hour of closing. Therefore I must compress my third division as closely as I possibly canlet us consider THE BLESSEDNESS OF THANKFULNESS. This man was more blessed, by far, than the nine. They were healed, but they were not blessed as he was. There is a great blessedness in thankfulness. First, because it is right. Should not Christ be praised? This man did what he could and there is always an ease of conscience and a rest of spirit when you feel that you are doing all you can in a right cause, even though you fall far short of your own desire. At this moment, my Brethren, magnify the Lord

*Meet and right it is to sing,   
In every time and place,   
Glory to our heavenly King,   
The God of truth and Grace.   
Join we, then, with sweet accord,   
All in one thanksgiving join!   
Holy, holy, holy Lord,   
Eternal praise be Yours.*

Next, there is this blessing in thankfulness, that it is a manifestation of personal love. I love the Doctrines of Grace, I love the Church of God, I love the Sabbath, I love the ordinances, but I love Jesus most. My heart never rests until I can glorify God, personally, and give thanks unto the Christ, personally. The indulgence of personal love to Christ is one of the sweetest things out of Heaven and you cannot indulge that personal love so well as by personal thankfulness both of heart and mouth and act and deed!

There is another blessedness about thankfulness it has clear views. The thankful eye sees far and deep. The man healed of leprosy, before he went on glorifying God, gave thanks to Jesus. If he had thanked Jesus and stopped there, I would have said that his eyes were not well open. But when he saw God in Christ and, therefore, glorified God for what Christ had done, he showed a deep insight into spiritual truth. He had begun to discover the mysteries of the Divine and Human Person of the blessed Lord. We learn much by prayer. Did not Luther say, To have prayed well is to have studied well? I venture to add a rider to what Luther has so ably saidTo have praised well is to have studied better. Praise is a great instructor! Prayer and praise are the oars by which a man may row his boat into the deep waters of the knowledge of Christ.

The next blessedness about praise is that it is acceptable to Christ. The Lord Jesus was evidently pleased. He was grieved to think the other nine did not come back, but He was charmed with this one man that he did return. The question, Where are the nine? bears within it a commendation of the one. Whatever pleases Christ should be carefully cultivated by us. If praise is pleasant to Him, let us continually magnify His name! Prayer is the straw of the wheat, but praise is the ear. Jesus loves to see the blade grow up, but He loves, better, to pluck the golden ears when the harvest of praise is ripe.

Next, notice that the blessedness of thankfulness is that it receives the largest blessing, for the Savior said to this man what He had not said to the others, your faith has made you whole. If you would live the higher life, be much in praising God! Some of you are in the lowest state as yet, as this man was, for he was a Samaritanbut by praising God he rose to be a songster rather than a stranger! How often have I noticed how the greatest sinner becomes the greatest praiser! Those that were farthest off from Christ, hope and puritywhen they become saved they feel that they owe the most and, therefore, they love the best. May it be the ambition of every one of us, even if we are not, originally, among the vilest of the vile, to feel that we owe Jesus most! And then we will praise Him most and thus shall we receive the richest blessing from His hands!

I have done when I have said three things. Let us learn from all this to put praise in a high place. Let us hold Praise Meetings. Let us think it as great a sin to neglect praise as to restrain prayer.

Next, let us pay our praise to Christ Himself. Whether we go to the priests or not, let us go to Him. Let us praise Him personally and vehemently! Personal praise to a personal Savior must be our lifes objective!

Lastly, if we work for Jesus and we see converts who do not turn out as we expected, do not let us be cast down about it. If others do not praise our Lord, let us be sorrowful, but let us not be disappointed. The Savior had to say, Where are the nine? Ten lepers were healed, but only one praised Him. We have many converts who do not join the Church. We have numbers of persons converted who do not come forward to Baptism or to the Lords Supper. Numbers get a blessing, but do not feel love enough to acknowledge it. Those of us who are soul-winners are robbed of our wages by the cowardly spirits who hide their faith. I thank God that of late we have had many avowing their conversion, but if the other nine would come, we would need nine Tabernacles! Alas for the many who have gone back after professing their faith! Where are the nine?

So you that hold Cottage Meetings; you that go round with tractsyou are doing more good than you will ever hear of! You do not know where the nine are, but even if you should only bless one out of 10, you will have cause to thank God.

Oh, says one, I have had so little success. I have had only one soul saved! That is more than you deserve. If I were to fish for a week and only catch one fish, I would be sorry, but if that fish happened to be a sturgeon, a royal fish, I would feel that the quality made up for lack of quantity. When you win a soul it is a great prize! One soul brought to Christ can you estimate its value? If one is saved, you should be grateful to your Lord and persevere! Though you wish for more conversions, you will not despond so long as even a few are saved and, above all, you will not be angry if some of them do not thank you personally, nor join in Church fellowship with you. Ingratitude is common towards soul-winners.

How often a minister has brought sinners to Christ and fed the flock in his early days! But when the old man grows feeble, they want to get rid of him and try a new broom which will sweep cleaner! Poor old gentleman, he is quite out of date! they say, and so they get rid of him, as gypsies turn an old horse out on the common to feed or starve, they care not which! If anybody expects gratitude, I would remind them of the benediction, Blessed are they that expect nothing, for they will not be disappointed. Even our Master did not get praise from the ninetherefore do not fret if you bless others and others do not bless you! Oh, that some poor soul would come to Christ, tonightsome leper to be healed of sinsickness! If he does find healing, let him come out and, with a loud voice magnify the Lord who has dealt so graciously with him!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2960 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHERE ARE THE NINE? WHERE?   
NO. 2960

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1863.

**And Jesus answering said, Were there not   
ten cleansed? But where are the nine?   
Luke 17:17.**

THE whole narrative connected with the text is worthy of your careful reading. There were 10 men, lepers who, according to the old proverb that birds of a feather flock together, had made a company and seemed to have lived in greater amity through kinship of suffering than they would have done had they been healthy and competent to share the fragrance of each others joys. Mutual woe may have softened some of their natural jealousies, for we find that there was at least one in the company who was a Samaritan, while the others were Jews. Now, the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans, yet, when both are placed beyond the pale of societyin their sickness an intimacy springs up between them. So does common calamity bring about strange friendships. These men, who, under any other circumstances, would have been mortal enemies, became comfortable companionsat least, so far as their disease would allow them the thought of comfort.

Do you not observe everywhere how sinners congregate together? Drunks are gregarious creaturesthey will not often drink alone. The lascivious song is hardly sweet unless it thrills from many tongues. In most sorts of merry-making that are not wise, we know that it is company that gives the zest and yields the main gratification. Men seem to have a sort of anticipation of the time when they shall be bound up in bundlesthey gaily forestall their gloomy doom as they bind themselves up in bundles while they are yet living! Oh, that Christians would adhere as closely to one another as sinners do! That they would forget their differences, whether they are Jews or Samaritans, and walk in friendship and love! If common sickness made the lepers a band, how much more should common mercy bind us to one another?

Well, it so happened that all these 10 lepers, at one time, agreed to go to Christ the great Healer. Oh, what a mercy it is when a whole hospital full of sinners will agree to go to Christ at once! I recollectI can never look back but with pleasure upon the time when a whole company of friends who were simply worldly, irreligious people, and were accustomed to meet together constantly, were all moved with a desire to come up to the House of God. And it pleased God to so direct the shot that the most of them were brought under the Divine Power! Some of them who are sitting here, now, will recollect right well when they used to issue invitations for their convivial parties on Sunday evenings! But now they are with us and are some of the most useful and vigorous church members that we have! It is a fine thing when the 10 lepers all agree to come togetherit will be a grander thing when the ten lepers are all healed and not one left to mourn that he has been neglected!

These lepers become an example to us, for they went to Jesus. Their disease was foul and loathsome. They felt it to be so. Their own society could not stand themthey needed health and nothing else but perfect health would content them. How did they go to Jesus? They first of all went directly, for it is written in the narrative that as Christ entered into a village, these lepers began to cry out. They did not wait until He got into the nearest house and had sat down and taken some refreshment. No, but they meet Him at the village gates! They waylay Him at the very portals. They cannot stopno delay, no procrastination for them! O leprous Sinner, go to Christ at once! Go now, tarry not until you have left the sanctuary! Wait not until the sermon is over! It is written, Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Young man, at the threshold of your life, seek Christ! Go now, you who have begun to be sick. Go now, young woman, now that your cheeks begin to be blanched with consumption. Go now, go at once, go instantly to meet the healing Savior!

They went humbly. They stood afar offnote that. They felt that they had no right to come near. So must we go to our Lord for mercy conscious that we have no claim upon Him and standing, just as the publican did, afar off, scarcely daring to lift our eyes to Heaven, we must cryGod be merciful to me a sinner. William Dawson once told this story to illustrate how humble the soul must be before it can find peace. He said that at a revival meeting, a little lad who was used to Methodist waysI do not tell the story for the sake of Methodism, but for the sake of the moralthe little boy went home to his mother and said, Mother, John So-and-So is under conviction and is seeking for peace. But he will not find it tonight, Mother. Why, William? she asked. Because he is only down on one knee, Mother, and he will never get peace until he is down on both knees. Now the moral of that story, using it metaphorically, is true. Until conviction of sin brings us down on both kneesuntil we are completely humbled, until we have no hope, no merit, no proud boasting leftwe cannot find the Savior! And we must be willing not to embrace Him like sanctified Mary, but to stand at a distance like the unclean lepers.

Observe how earnestly they sought Him. They cried with a loud voice, or, rather, They lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! They emulated one another. One cried with all his might, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! And another seemed to say, That is not loud enough. And so he shouted, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! And so each one strained his voice that he might reach the ear of the Savior. There is no winning mercy without holy violence. The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. You recollect that blind man who was sitting on the bank, one day, when Jesus went by and, as he heard a great noise of a mob passing along, he said, What is all the noise? They said, Jesus of Nazareth passes by. The man, with quick perception, perceived that here was an opportunity for him, so he shouted with all his might, You Son of David, have mercy on me! Now Christ was in the middle of a sermon and some of the Apostles, as some of our good deacons might do when there was a little disturbance slipped out of the crowd to say, Hush, dont make that noise! You will disturb the Preacher. But he cried, You Son of David, have mercy on me! Hold your tongue! The Master cannot attend to you. And other zealous friends gathered round and would have put him out of the way, but he cried the more a great deal, You Son of David, have mercy on me!

Well, now, it is just thus that we must pray if we would get the mercy! Cold prayers court refusal. Heaven is not to be obtained by lukewarm supplications. Heat your prayers red-hot, Brothers and Sisters! Plead the blood of Jesus! Plead like one who means to prevailand then you shall prevail!

Not to tarry where there is plenty of room for long observations, let me turn your attention to the way in which Christ cured these 10 lepers.   
There is a singular variety in Christs methods of cure. Sometimes it is a touch. Another time, clay and spittle. At other times, a word. This time He said to them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. They were not clean and they might, therefore, have turned round and said, What a foolish errand! Why should we go and exhibit our filthiness to priests? Master, will You cure us or not? If You will cure us, we can then go to the priests. If You will not, it is a vain errand to go to the priests to be again doomed to seclusion. They did not ask questions, however. They were too wise for that. They did just what they were told and though they were white, and far from being like men whose flesh is sound, the whole 10 set off on their pilgrimage to go to the priests. And, as they went, suddenly the cure was worked and they were, every one of them, clean! Oh, what a beautiful picture is this of the plan of salvation! Jesus Christ says, Believe on Me and live. Oh, be not foolish! Do not say, But, Lord, make me whole and then I will believe. Do not say, Lord, give me a tender heart and then I will come. Lord, forgive my sin and then I will love You. But do as He bids you. He bids you trust Him, so, do as He bids youtrust Him! And while you are trusting Himwhile you are going to Him with the white leprosy still in your skin, while you are yet upon the wayHe will heal you! You know that we are not to be saved, first, and to believe in Christ afterwardsthat may be the order of Gods covenant revelation, but it is not the order of our spiritual apprehension! We are to first believe, just as we are   
*All unholy and unclean,   
Being nothing else but sin*   
I am to believe that Jesus Christ is able to save me. I am to trust my soul with Him that He may save it. And, in the act of so doing I shall find salvation! Be not, I pray you, so foolish as to say, Lord, I object to this method of procedure. Seek no needless preparation! Do not hesitate and stop until you feel ready to come to Him

*Let not conscience make you linger,   
Nor of fitness fondly dream.   
All the fitness He requires   
Is to feel your need of Him   
This He gives you!   
Tis the Spirits rising beam.*   
Let us now fix our attention more closely on the text. I think I see those 10 menthey are trudging along the road and as they go they are obliged to wear a veil and to cry, as they march alongUnclean, unclean, unclean, so as to warn the party that lepers are on the road. Suddenly, while they are marching on, one of them turns to his fellow sufferer, and says, I am clean. And the next says, So am I! And the whole 10 turn round and look at one another and each man, as he looks first at his own flesh and then at his fellows, comes to the conclusion that the whole 10 have been healed in an instant! What shall we do? says one of them. Why, say the others, we had better go on to the priests and get officially cleansed as soon as possible. I have a farm, says one, I have been a long while away from it and I should like to get back. Ah, says another, and I have not seen my wife for many a day. Let me be off to the priest and then go home to her. Ah, says another, there are my dear little childrenI hope soon to take them on my knee. Yes, says another, and I want to join my old friendsto get back to my former companions.   
But there is another who says, You dont mean to say you will go on, do you? I think we ought to go back and thank the Man that has made us whole. This is Gods work and if we are to go and thank God in the Temple, I think we ought first to go and thank God in the Man who has done us this benefit, the Man, Christ Jesus. Let us go back to Him. Oh! says another, I think we had better not. If we dont go to the priest at once, our friends will not know us again and it will be a disgrace to us, in later years, if they say, That is John the leper. That is Samuel the leper. I think we had better go to the priest at once, get the thing done and then get back as soon as we can. Lets see, you go to Bethsaida and you go to Capernaum. Let us get back as quietly as possible and hold our tongues about it. That, is our policy. What? says the other manand he was a SamaritanWhat? Do that? Never has such love been heard of as that which has been shown to us, and such a gift as we have received ought to meet with something like gratitude. If you will not go back, I will, he said. And they turn round, perhaps, and laugh at him for his over-zeal and one of them says, Our Samaritan friend always was fanatical. Fanatical or not, he says, I have received such a favor that I never could repay it, even if I counted out my lifes blood in drops and, therefore, I will go back to Him and fall at His feet, and adore Him as God, seeing he has worked a Divine work in me. Away he goes! Down he falls at Jesus feet, adores Him as God and with as loud a voice as once he cried, Lord, have mercy on me, he cries now, Glory, glory, glory be unto Your name. Jesus answers, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?   
I am going to use the Saviors question, with that picture before you, and I hope we may give a satisfactory account of the nine. Gratitude is a very rare thing. If any of you try to do good for the sake of getting gratitude, you will find it one of the most profitless trades in the world. If you can do good, expecting to be abused for it, you will get your reward, but if you do good with an expectation of gratitude in return, you will be bitterly disappointed. If anybody is grateful for anything you do, be surprised at it, for it is the way of the world to generally be ungrateful. The more you do, the more you may do and when you have done your best, your friend will forget it. Alas, that this should be true, in a spiritual sense, with regard to Christians! I shall take that class first. How many are there in this House of God whose sins have been forgiven? They owe to Christ a healing far more wonderful than that of being cleansed from leprosy! The Lord has made them cleanthey are saved from death and Hell. But, of the saved people in the world, how many there are who never make even an open profession of their being saved at all? A few there are who comeshall I say only one out of ten? They are baptized, we give them the right hand of fellowship, we thank Godthis is well, but where are the nine? Where are the nine?   
Every now and then a Brother who has been made a partaker of Sovereign Grace comes forward and says, I am on the Lords side. Bless God for that! But are there not many who are hiding themselves, like Saul, among the stuff? Where are the nine? Walk through the streets. Travel this great city of Londonare we to believe that there is no more Christianity in London then that which is apparent in our congregations? I cannot think so! I hope that there are multitudes of true Christians who never did come out and say, I am a follower of the Lamb. But is this right? Where are the nine? Are they where they are doing good? Are they not in the cowards place? Are they not skulking like deserters? Where are the nine? How it is that they bring no glory to God! Purchased with Christs blood, why do they not acknowledge that they are His? Being one with Him secretly, why do they not become one with Him publicly? He said, If you love Me, keep My commandments. O, you nine, where are you?   
But out of those who do make a profession, to come closer home to most of you, how few there are that live up to it! The profession is made and they call themselves the people of God. And there are some Christiansespecially some in the humbler walks of lifewhose daily walk is the best sermon upon religion that can possibly be preached. With what satisfaction have I often looked upon many a poor girl struggling hard to earn her daily bread with her needle, but adorning the Doctrine of God even more than a bishop on the bench! And how have I seen some of you in other ranks, too, and marked your consistency of life, the incorruptibility of your honestyhow you will stand out against temptations and are neither to be moved by bribes, nor to be subdued by threats! Now this is true of many Christians. You will meet with them every now and thenmen who are like pillars of light, as the saintly Basil desired to bemen who reflect the image of Christ. As soon as you see them, you have no need to ask, Whose image and superscription is this? They live like Jesus! Their holiness, their loving spirit, their prayerfulness, their gentleness all betoken that they are like the Savior. Ah, this is true of somebut where are the nine? Where are the nine?   
That shop-counter can tell where some of them arecheating the public. Where are the nine? Some of them inconsistent in their walk worldly with the worldly, frothy with the light and trifling, as giddy and as fond of carnal pleasure as anybody! Where are the nine? O Brothers and Sisters, if all who profess to be Gods people really lived up to what they profess, what a grand world this would be! How changed world trade would become! How different your merchandise and your traffic! How altered the appearance of everything! How blessed the poor, how happy the rich! Where would be your pride? Where your striving after high gentility? Where your longing after so much creature respect and earthly grandeur? The whole thing would be done away with if we became like Christ! In the case of some few, they are delivered from this present evil world according to the will of God. But where are the nine? Where are the nine? Let their conscience answer.   
And in our churches, too, how few there are who, making a profession of religion, are fervent in it! If you want good people who go regularly to church or chapel, subscribe a little, sometimesdo not mind walking through the Sunday school once in a year. Feel a good deal for the poor and needy, only do not feel in their pockets! If you want good people who wish all sorts of good things, but never do themI can find them as readily as I can find birds nests in winter time when the leaves are stripped off the trees! But if you want those who give body, soul and strength to Gods causeif you would have women who can break the alabaster box of precious ointment for Jesus, as Mary didif you would have those that love much because much has been forgiven, I hardly think you will find one in ten! And very likely that one in ten will be a Samaritanone who, in her former state, was full of sin or a man who, before his conversion, was one of the vilest of the vile! You will often find pure and perfect love there when you may not find it anywhere else. I thank God that in this congregation there are many who consistently and cheerfully give up their substance to the Lordone in tenbut where are the nine? I thank God that in this congregation there are many earnest workers, so that the Sunday schools in the neighborhood are mainly supplied with our congregation. This is good, but, where are the nine?   
I thank God for those men who stand in the street and preach, and for those Brothers and Sisters who distribute tracts, or in other ways seek to serve their Master. This is noble of youbut, how many do it? Where are the nine? Summon the church members, march them all along and let the officers eyes run down the ranks and he will say, Yes, there is one there who serves his Master well. Stand out. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nineyou may go on. Here comes anotherYes, this man does live for the cause of Christ. You can stand out, too. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nineyou may go onyou do nothing at all. I am afraid the average is even less in some churches and I might, if I were addressing some congregations, not only say Where are the nine? but, Where are the ninety-nine? For 99 out of a hundred among some professors do not live to God with zeal, with fire, with earnestness and with fervor! No, my Brothers and Sisters, when you fetch out such men as Brainerd. When you bring into the front ranks such men as Henry Martyn, such evangelists as Whitefield and Wesley, such toilsome missionaries of the Cross as Robert Moffat or John Williams, you may say, after you have looked at them, Yes, these do well. They owe much to God and they live as if they felt it. But where are the ninety-nine? Where are the nine hundred and ninety-nine?

We all owe as much as they, but oh, how little we do! The ground has been plowed as much, watered as much and sown as well, but we do not bring forth twenty-fold, while they bring forth a hundred!   
Where are the nine? Come now, I should not like to leave this point until I have found out some of the nine. Are there not some of my own church members who are doing nothing? You do not help the Sunday school. We require a number of young men and women to go to Kent Street Ragged Schools to teach on Sabbaths and that is one reason why I want to find out where the nine are. There is a noble field of labor amidst the poverty and degradation of Kent Street and I think we, as a church, ought to look after that locality. Where are the nine? Am I not addressing some who are doing nothing for Christ? When Brothers and Sisters, now and then say to me, Well, Sir, what shall we do? I usually suspect that they are rather lazy, for an industrious person soon finds plenty to do in such a city as this! But if there are any of the nine present, let me call them out. For your own comforts sake, for the worlds sake, for Christs sake, for your souls sake because men are dying, time is flying, eternity is hastening, come, I pray you, come forth, you that are of the nine! One feels, sometimes, in prospect of death, like the venerable Bede, who, when he had nearly translated the Gospel of John, said to the young man who was writing from his dictation, Write fast, write fast, for I am dying. How far are you now? How many verses remain? So many. Quicker, quicker, he said, write more quickly, for I am dying. When at length he said, I have come to the last verse, the good old man folded his arms, sang the Doxology and fell asleep in Jesus! Quickly, Brother, quickly! You will never get through the chapter if you do not work and write quickly! Quickly, quickly, your time of dying is so near and then, when you have done, if you have worked quickly for Christ though it is not of debt but of Grace, you will be able to say, Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, and with the Doxology on your quivering lips you will go to sing the Doxology in sweeter strains above!   
Having thus somewhat roughly handled professors of religion, I am going to address those who have received special favors from God. Like the 10 lepers, there are many in the world who have had very special favors. How many are present tonight who have had fever, cholera, or some sickness which appeared to be unto death? I bless God that when I was last sitting to see enquirers, a very considerable number traced their conversion to sickbeds. They were there awakened and they afterwards came up to Gods House   
*To pay the vows   
Their souls in anguish made.*   
Yes, those are the ones typified by the Samaritan! But where are the nine? Is there not one of them under the gallery there, to the right, he who was nearly drowned at sea and, just then, oh, how he vowed that if God would spare him, he would live to Gods service? But he is one of the nine. Have I not another, yonder, who was given up by the doctor and, like Hezekiah, turned his face to the wall and said, Lord, only let me live, and I will be a different man? But if there is any difference, he has been rather worse than better! There is another of the nine. I need not go out to find the other seventhey are all here. They have, some of them, been sick, some of them have suffered from some accident, some have undergone operations, some have passed through imminent peril both on land and sea and some have had their lives preservedI think I see them nowto a very advanced period of life. Where are the nine? There is one of the nine herehe has passed his threescore years and ten and while some of his age have been brought to know the Lord by reason of His goodness and kindness in thus lengthening their span, he still remains and does not give glory to God. O souls, to lie to God is to lie with a vengeance! To promise Him and to not performwhat? Is God to be played with? Will you play fast and loose with Him? Dare you befool yourself with the Most High and promise Him this and that, and then break your vow? In the name of God, you nine, I cite you to make your appearance at the last great bar except you now turn from the error of your ways! May the Spirit of God turn you, for otherwise, when the question is asked, Where are the nine? you must be dragged forward and your vows, and bonds, and privileges shall be all urged against you and shall be swift witness against you forever!   
Where are the nine? I may remind you of the common mercies that we all enjoy. Fed each day by Divine bounty, clothed by Heavens charity, supplied with breath by God, there are some who live to praise Him, some who give back that breath in praise which God prolongs in mercy, who spend that life to His honor which His long-suffering permits to last. But these are but one in ten, shall I say one in ten thousand? Where are the nine? Here are some of themmen who live upon God, but never live to God! Men who go from morning to night without prayerwho roll out of bed in the morning and get to their laborand roll into it at night, fall asleep again, but never utter, never feel a God be thanked for this days favor! Never a breathing of the heart towards the God who is in Heaven! Like brutes they live and like brutes they will die. Only, unlike brutes, they will rise again and receive, for the deeds done in the body, the due reward of the evil that they have done! Where are the nine? Let the question provoke you to weep over your ingratitude and lead you to turn to God.   
Then again, to use the question another way, where are the nine who have listened to the Gospel? Lately the Lord has been very gracious to our city. Our preachers have not been quite so dead and dull as they once were. The theatres have echoed with the name of Jesus! Men like Radcliffe, and North, with Richard Weaver, chief and foremost, and Mr. Denham Smith, have preached the Word with power and from among the crowds who have gone in and out of the theatres, some have been converted to Godbut where are the nine? Where are the nine? And in this house, too, with its aisles and its seats thronged so constantly how many thousands listen to our voice? Yes, I thank God, some not in vain, for some of all sorts, of every rank and condition have believed in Jesusbut, still, where are the nine? Christians, here is a solemn question for you! There is much good being done in London just now, but we question whether all the Evangelical labor in London is carried on by so much as one in ten. Then, where are the nine?   
When I was in some of the back streets in the neighborhood of Kent Street last week, I was very pleased, as I went along, to notice in one little house, Cottage meetings held here. A little further on, a Ragged School. A little further on, a Prayer Meeting held here twice a week. I could hardly see a street, however low, that seemed to be without some traces of religious effort and action! You could not have stated this seven years ago. I believe the signs of the time are favorable, but yet the effort put forth is not at all commensurate with the dire necessity of the age. You do much. The City Mission does much. Your tract-distributing, despite all that is said against it, does much. Your street-preaching does much more than critics will allow. I believe that there is more good being done by the preaching in the streets than by the preaching within walls, with some few exceptions. Go on with what is being done, but multiply your agencies, for let this question goad you on, What of the nine? What of the nine?   
O dear Friends, if we could but hope that one in ten in this great city was converted, we might set the bells ringing far more merrily than when the Princess passed through the streets! But I fear we have not got to that. However, if we had, it would be a solemn question for us to ask, What of the nine? I am afraid some of that nine come here. You are here tonight unconverted. O dear Friends, do you remember when you were young? There were 10 of youyou are the only one left. What of the nine? They are all dead. As far as you know, they are all lost and you are the only one left. Oh, that God would make you His tonight! Or it may be that you have been listening a long time to the Word of God and you have seen one converted, and another converted, but there you are and your other companions still unblessed! Oh, that you, the nine, might be brought in! We must pray to God to convert the nine! We cannot let Him go with the onewe must have the nine brought in! The day will come when Christ shall sit on the Throne of His Glory and there shall come up before Him the onesand He shall say, Come, you blessedbut after He has done that, He may well say, I gave breath to more than these! I sent the Gospel to more than these! I was merciful to more than these! Where are the nine? And then, you nine, you must make your appearance. And He will say to you, I fed you, but you lived not to Me. I called you, but you would not come. I invited you, but you would not turn. And now, you nine, depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.   
But, hope, is the word for tonight, even for the nine! May God be pleased to give you hope within while I utter hope without! Jesus died. His death is your life! Trust Him and you are saved! Rest on Him with your whole weight! Throw yourself flat upon Himhave nothing to do with standing in your own strength, but prostrate at the foot of His dear Cross, lay yourself down and you shall not be numbered with the nine, but you shall return to give glory to God, even though, up to now, you may have been a Samaritan, a stranger, the chief of sinners! May God add His blessing, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:\* **ACTS 27:11-44.**

\* [This Exposition belongs to Sermon #2952, Volume 52THE CHURCHTHE WORLDS HOPE Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at http://www.spurgeons.org. There was no space available for its publication there.]

Paul had advised the captain not to set sail for a while.   
Verses. 11-13. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship more than those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to depart at once, if by any means they might reach Phoenix and winter there; which is a harbor of Crete, and lies toward the southwest and northwest. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they sailed from there close by Crete. He is very unwise who trusts the winds and equally so is he who sets his confidence upon any earthly thing, for fickle as the wind that blows are all things beneath the moon!

14, 15. But not long after, there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. You may have a calm at one moment and a storm at the next! And unless your protection is from above and your confidence in something more stable than can be found in this world, woe betide you! Sometime it is well to yield to the stress of circumstances. If you have struggled hard and can do no more, it is well to leave the result with God.

16-21. And running under the shelter of an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. When they had taken it on board, they used cables, undergirding the ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksand, struck sail and so were driven. And we, being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship; and when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken awry. But after long abstinence. They had not the time or the heart to eat and perhaps scarcely thought of doing so while they were in such imminent peril of their lives.

21. Paul stood forth in the midst of them. A prisoner, but the freest man there! Despised and yet the most honored among them. The bravest heart of all that company of soldiers and sailors.

21-24. And said, Sirs, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any mans life among you out of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God has given you all them that sail with you. Oh, what a privilege it would be if God would say the same to us! If, in the night of trouble, when you are tossed to and fro, mother, father, the Lord should say to you, Fear not, I have given you your whole familythey shall all be saved. You would not mind how fiercely the storm might rage if you could be sure of that! And how happy would my heart be if all that sail in this big vessel were given to me! I should not be satisfied even thenI should want a great many more than thatbut still, what a blessed thing it would be to have every soul that sails with us saved!

25-27. Therefore, Sirs, be of good cheer for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country. They could hear the roar of the breakers.

28. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. They found that the water was very quickly becoming shallow, so they knew that they were getting near the shore.

29. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. Then they wished for the day. And how often the Christian throws his great anchor out and wishes for the daywaiting till the day break and the shadows flee away. Well, it will not be long! If night lasts through the whole of this life, the morning comesthe everlasting morning!

30. And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense they were putting out anchors from the prow. These cowardly sailors meant to get away and leave the prisoners and passengers and soldiers to perish.

31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, you cannot be saved. Yet God had said that they should be, so that it is quite consistent to believe in Divine Predestination and yet to see the utility, no, the necessity, of the use of means! Except these abide in the ship, you cannot be saved.

32. Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the skiff and let her fall. So that the sailors could not get away.   
33, 34. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that you have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Therefore I pray you to take some meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. What a grand speech this is! It is the utterance of faith. Talk of eloquence! This is real eloquencefor Paul to be addressing the people in a storm-tossed ship as calmly as if he were safely on shore.   
35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. He would not eat without giving thanks to God. There are some who do, even as the swine do, but the Christian finds it good at all times, before he eats, to bless the God that gave the food to him! It is a Christian habit which should not be given up. Paul gave thanks when it was most inconvenient to do sowhen a great storm was raging and when there were only two or three on board who sympathized with him.   
36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. Courage is contagious, as well as timidity. The holy bravery of one good man my make many others brave.  
37-39. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and cast out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. They wanted to let her go ashore and break up, and so save their lives.   
40-42. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground, and the forepart stuck fast, and remained immovable but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. And the soldiers counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape. The soldiers were responsible for them. It would be required at their hands if a prisoner escaped, so, with that cruelty and yet that obedience to law which was characteristic of the Roman legions, the soldiers counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape.   
43, 44. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land. So God had said, and so it came to pass.

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AND WHY NOT?   
NO. 1323

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOV. 12, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And He said unto the disciples, The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you shall not see it Luke 17:22.**

WHILE the Lord was yet on earth the days of the Son of Man were but lightly esteemed. The Pharisees spoke of them with a sneer and demanded when the kingdom of God should come. As much as to say, Is this the coming of your promised kingdom? Are these fishermen and peasants your courtiers? Are these the days for which Prophets and kings waited so long? Yes, Jesus tells them, these are the very days. The kingdom of God is set up within mens hearts and is among you even now. And the time will come when you will wish for these days back again. And even those who best appreciate them, shall, before long, confess that they thought too little of them, and sigh in their hearts for their return.

This suggests the remark that we are bad judges of our present experiences. Those days of which we think very little while they were passing over us come, by-and-by, to be remembered with great regret. Have you not found it so in your own lives? Has it not been so that the very experience which caused you anxiety while you were passing through it was, afterwards, appeared to be so excellent in your eyes that you have wished to have it back again? I have said unto my soul sometimes, How heavy you are! How are you bowed down! How little do you rejoice in the Lord! It is sad that you should fall into this condition.

The period of heaviness has passed away and then I have chided my heart in another way, saying, Soul, how careless and unfeeling you are! It were better for you if you were as heavy, now, as you were a little while ago, for then you were in earnestthen you were driven to mighty and prevailing prayerbut now you are steeped in lethargy! You have lost your fervency and are scarcely alive at all! This stage has gone by and I have again had to look back and feel that when I thought myself insensible I was really very spiritual and sensitiveand that my fears of falling into carnal ease were sure proofs that I was carefully upon the watch. Thus are we delivered from carnal security by being made to see more beauty in past experiences than in those now passing over us.

Holy anxiety, when it broods over us, is often mistaken for unbelief. Full assurance is suspected to be presumption and joy is doubted and stinted for fear it should be pride and self-deception! When our spiritual spring is with us, we are fearful of its March winds and April showers. But when it is gone and we are parched with summer heat, we wish we had the winds and showers back again. So, too, when autumn comes, we mistake ripening for decaying and mournfully wish the roses of summer would returnwhile all through winter we are sighing for those summer hours we once enjoyed and those mellow autumn fruits which were so

sweet to our taste. Thus, Brothers and Sisters, we continue, if we permit ourselves to do so, to judge each state in which we have been to be better than that in which we are, and to shed useless tears of regret over times and seasons which are gone past recall!

While they are with us, we see their deficiencies. When they are gone, we remember only their excellencies. It were wiser if we took each time and season, and state and experience, while yet it was on the wing, turned it to the best account for Gods Glory and rejoiced in it! It will be time, enough, to mourn when it is gone from us. After all, each season has its fruits and it were a pity to wither them with idle regrets. Let us turn to good account the old worldlings motto, and live while we live. Let us live one day at a time, enjoy the present good and leave yesterday with our pardoning God. The days of the Son of Man, of which the Apostles thought comparatively little, they afterwards sighed for. And these present days, of which we are complaining, may yet come to be regarded as among the choicest portions of our lives.

Our second remark is a very commonplace one, you have heard it a thousand timeswe seldom value our mercies till we lose them. We best appreciate their excellence when we have to deplore their absence. This has been so often said that I wish it did not continue to be true, for it is an atrocious piece of folly that, after all, we should be obliged to lose our blessings in order to learn gratitude for them! Are we such dolts that we never shall know better than this? Such conduct is only worthy of the idiot or the insane! Can we not put away such childishness and thus remove one occasion for our sorrows? Would it not be well to resolve, in Gods strength, to estimate the blessing while we have it, and so to use it that when it is gone we may remember that we turned it to the best account for our souls profit, for the benefit of others, and for Gods Glory?

We cannot call back the sun and lengthen out these shortening days, but we can, at least, so live that every flying hour shall carry with it, tidings of our zealous industry in our Masters cause. Come, dear Brothers and Sisters, whatever is our present condition is good, let us bless God for it now and use at once its peculiar opportunities and advantages, lest haply, in some future day we should rue our foolish neglect and desire too late to see more of such days. This morning, as the Holy Spirit may help me, I intend to use the text, first, by explaining its immediate interpretation. Then, secondly, by giving an interpretation adapted to Believers at the present day. And then, thirdly, by urging home another interpretation, much after the same import, adapted to unbelievers at this time.

I. First, let us consider THE IMMEDIATE INTERPRETATION of our text. The first meaning ought always to have the preference in every discourse. We must always mind the mind of the Spirit. Did not our Savior mean two things, first, that the day would come in which His disciples would look back regretfully upon the past, wishing that they could have Him walking among them again? And, secondly, that they would anxiously look forward to the future, wishing that they might, if it were only for one day, behold Him in His Glory, enthroned in power, as He shall be in the latter days, when He shall stand a second time upon the earth?

Looking either backward or forward, the one thing they sighed for was to have their Lord personally and visibly with them. First, then, I say, our Lord meant that they would look back regretfully upon the days when He was with them. In a short time His words were true enough, for sorrows came thick and threefold. At first they began to preach with uncommon vigor and the Spirit of God was upon them so that thousands were converted in a single day. Then they saw how expedient it was that their Lord should go and that the Spirit should be given. Persecution, however, soon arose and they were scattered abroad. And many of them, doubtless, mourned those quieter days when their Lords Presence shielded them.

Still, in all their scattering, the power of the Spirit rested upon them and they increased and multipliedand the joy of the Lord was their strength. But by-and-by the love of many waxed cold and their first zeal declined. Persecution increased in its intensity and the timid shrank away from them. Evildoers and evil teachers came into the Church. Heresies and schisms began to divide the body of Christ and dark days of lukewarmness and half-heartedness covered them. In such circumstances many and many a time did the true servant of Christ say, O for an hour with the Lord Jesus! O for one of the days of the Son of Man, when the arm of the Lord was revealed among us! O that we might go to Him and tell Him all our problems and ask his guidance and entreat Him to put forth His power!

I can imagine that all the first generation, and the next, and the next, after our Lord had ascended, had often upon their lips the sigh, Would to God we could see one of the days of the Son of Man! Oh, where is He that trod the sea and made the waves of the lake of Galilee lie still at His feet? Oh, where is He that chased the demons and met our foes at every point? They must often have felt a strong desire to see one of those grand days of miracles when even the devils were subject to them. It has often occurred to us to desire the same. Though it is now 1,800 years ago and more since the Lord went into His Glory and though He has given us the blessed Spirit to abide with us in His place, yet we have fondly wished, but wished in vain, that we could, for one day, at least, see Him healing the sick and raising the dead!

See here, the scoffers tell us that God is dead, or that if there is a God, He has no influence in this world, but has laid aside His powers and handed it over to certain rigid laws with which He has nothing to do. Oh, if we could have the Incarnate God among us but for a day to work His wonders of Grace, to feed the hungry, to open blind eyes, to unstop deaf ears, to make the lame man leap like a rabbit and cause the tongue of the dumb to sing! Have you not desired it? Your desire will not be gratified. You shall not see it. It would not be of much service if you did see it. It could only happen in one place upon any one day and you who already believe would be confirmed by what you saw, but not so unbelievers.

We should only have to begin a new battle with infidels, who would as readily deny that which happened today as that which happened almost 2,000 years ago! Only those who saw the miracle would ever believe that it occurred and a large proportion of these would begin to say, This was probably done by sleight of hand, or they would ascribe it to magnetism, or electricity, or some newly-discovered force. Miracles will not convince

when men are resolved to disbelieve! Faith is not born of sight, nor can it be nourished by it. It is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit and we err if we believe that even Christs bodily Presence and the repetition of His miracles would be of any value! He who believes not Moses and the Prophets, neither would he believe though he were to be dazzled with miracles! The kind of faith which merely outward signs would produce would not be the faith of Gods elect.

Then, too, we have been wearied with fierce disputing upon this doctrine and upon that, and one has said, This is the Masters mind, and another has said, No. One teacher has denounced his fellow and has been answered by an excommunication from his opponent. In these controversies have we not wished that we could go to Jesus with all questions and say, Master, give us one Infallible Word, untie or cut these knots with one word of Your lips. Then will Your poor Church be no longer disquieted with debates. Brothers and Sisters, Jesus is not here! Instead of His Presence, we have that of His Spirit, and though you may wish for His bodily Presence, it would not be of much service to you in the matter for which you desire it, for, strange to say, if our Lord were to speak again, men would begin to dispute tomorrow about what He meant today, even as they now quarrel over His Words of 1,800 years ago!

His language in this Book is already so very plain that I do not know, if He were to speak again, that He could speak more clearly than He has done. At any rate, His hearers said of Him, in the days of His sojourn here, Never man spoke like this Man, and I suppose if He were to speak again, He would not improve upon what He has already spoken, nor would He teach us much more. For us to hear Him speaking, again, would only be to create a new opportunity for a fresh set of controversiesand we should have among us the Old School Christians, and the Christians of the Later Revelation, which would double the confusion and make bad worse! No, my Brethren, we need the Holy Spirit to enlighten us as to what our Lord has already spoken, but it is idle to wish that He would teach among us again.

We ignorantly desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but Divine Providence kindly denies us our wish and tells us plainly, You shall not see it. Ah, but you have said, Only to see our blessed Lord once! Just to cast eyes upon His beloved Person for a moment! To hear but once the tones of His heart-moving voice! Oh, if I might but once unloose His sandals or kiss His feet, how would my spirit feel confidence and joy all her days! How would faith grow if she could but have a little actual and intimate communion with the Well-Beloved! I would gladly give all that I have for one glance of His eyes. I know you have indulged that thought, for I have often had it myself, but dear Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord Jesus were to come upon earth, I am not sure that you could have much of His company, because there are so many of His peopleand each one would wish to entertain Him.

He could, as a Man, be but in one place at one time, and you might get to see Him, perhaps, once in the year, but what would you do all the rest of the year, when you might not be able to hear His voice because He would be in America or in Australia? How much better off would you be? Surely none at all! It is far better for you to continue to say, Whom not having seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The fact is, Brothers and Sisters, the great battle of the Lord has to be fought out upon the lines of faith and, for us to see with our eyes would spoil it all. That sight of the eyes and hearing with the ears which we desire, just to break the monotony of the walk of faith, would, in fact, spoil it all, and amount to a virtual defeat.

Our God is saying to us, My Children, can you trust Me? Can you obtain the blessing of those who have not seen and yet have believed? Abraham trusted Me, but he heard Me speak with an audible voice. Moses trusted Me, but he saw My wonders in Egypt and in the wilderness. Can you trust Me without voice or miracle? The Lord has spoken to us by His Son, who is better than all voices or wonders! Can we now believe Him? Is the spiritual life within us strong enough to believe the Lord without any further evidence? Can we honor Him by resting upon His sure Word without seeing signs or wonders? We, upon whom the ends of the earth have come, are set to work out the great problem of defeating the powers of darkness and walking throughout an entire life by simple, undiluted faithcan we accomplish it? By the Spirits help we can!

I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, say unto the Lord, Lord, increase our faith, and grant that we may so trust You that from now on we may neither ask for sight nor sound, nor anything else that would prevent our resting on Your bare Word. You have fallen into that mistaken condition and wished for one of the days of the Son of Man, but you shall not have it, for your heavenly Father has reserved some better thing for you, that you, to the end, with simple, unalloyed faith in Him, should endure and conquer through the blood and the power of your unseen Redeemer, who is really with you, though you see Him not!

Our second reading of the text was that these disciples would look forward, sometimes, with anxious expectation. If we cannot go back, they would say, Oh that He would hurry on and quickly bring us the predicted era of triumph and joy! Oh for one of the days of the Glory of the Son of Man! They would gladly have a drop of the Glory before the shower of the Millennium. They would hear one blast of His trumpet before it shall sound to raise the dead and see one flash of the eternal morning before whose dawning the shadows shall forever flee. Have you not, sometimes, desired the same? I know when I stood at the foot of the so-called Holy Staircase at Rome and saw the poor deluded creatures crawling up and down the steps, in hopes of obtaining remission of sins by their prayers, I wished the Lord would flash forth His power a moment upon those horrible priests who had degraded their people by such superstition!

One of the days of the Son of Man with the scourge of small cords would effect a great change in the Church of Rome, but one of the days of the Son of Man with the iron rod would be better, for there are plenty of potters vessels around the Vatican that need dashing to shivers! Our indignation would anticipate the judgment and put a speedy end to Antichrist. We long to see the millstone dashed into the flood from the angels hand, never to rise again! In all this indignant impatience there is much

that needs repressing. Our Lord says to us, My Children, what have I to do with you? My hour is not yet come.

We know not what spirit we are of, for in reality we are wanting to give up the battle on the present lines and see it fought out in another way! Or, in other words, we consent to a defeat, so far as faith goes, and would console ourselves with victory obtained in another manner. Suppose we wish for one of the days of the Son of Man to break down the idols of the heathen and the images of the Papiststo overthrow all systems of error and to establish straight away, by force of Omnipotence the kingdom of Christ? Now, if our wish could be granted, what would it all amount to? It would only manifest what is clear enough, already, namely, the power of God in the world of matter! But it would not prove His greatness in the moral and the spiritual worlds.

If you will think of it, awhile, you will see that the Omnipotence of God is not the question. It is clear that any act of power can be performed by the Lord at once. He could, beyond all doubt, in a moment, confound His enemies and utterly destroy their errors by crushing the advocates of them. But that is not the point. The question iscan the force of love and truth by the Gospel of Jesus win mens hearts? Can Christ, in His people, conquer sin, falsehood and hatred by purely spiritual means? Can sinful creatures, such as we are, continue faithful to God under temptation and allurements? Will God, by the feeble instrumentality of men and women living and teaching the Gospel of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is a purely spiritual power, be able to break down the works of Satan, abolish the false gods, scatter infidelity and Antichristand establish the kingdom of Grace, peace and righteousness?

Do you not see, Brothers and Sisters, that to invoke the interference of mere power is to spoil the experiment? The glory of the latter days befits the period of triumph, but not the time of conflict! To snatch from the future a day of its splendors would be to alter the conditions of the great fight and so to accept a defeat! The result is safe enough! The battle is the Lords and He will win and, therefore, do not let us give way to these misplaced pipedreams and longings. Ah, says one, I wish He would come, now, and divide the sheep from the goats. Why? Are not the sinners better among the saints for awhile, that the Gospel may the more easily reach them? Remember, also, that the farmer would not have the tares divided from the wheat till the harvest came.

Oh, but we wish the Lord would come and put an end to sin. Is it not better that His long-suffering should patiently wait, calling men to repentance and culling out His elect from the sons of men throughout many a generation? The waiting is dreary to you, but it is not long nor dreary to His infinite patience. Oh, but this delay is tedious, and infidels are demanding, Where is the promise of His coming? Brothers and Sisters, of what consequence is it what unbelievers say? Are Heavens affairs to be arranged to meet their foolishness? He that sits in the heavens does laugh; the Lord does have them in derision. Would it not be better for you, also, to scorn their scorning? Who are they that we should be afraid of their reviling?

Ah, you say, but error has so long prevailed and it grows worse and worse. What if it does? It shall still be overruled for the Lords Glory! God is still on the Throne. He is in no hurry. Remember the infinite leisure of the Eternal! What would a million, million ages be to Him? Truly He comes quickly, but you must not read that, quickly, after your rendering, for, quickly, with Him may be slowly enough for us. We cannot measure the paces of the Infinite, for the whole history of man is but a pins point to His eternity! Our judgments of Jehovahs going forth are sure to err He walks, we are told, upon the wings of the windHe is only walking when He moves as swiftly as the tempest! We may as readily err upon the other side and think Him slow, when in reality, He rides upon a cherub and does fly! A thousand years to Him are as one day, and one day with Him is as a thousand years!

No, we will not beseech the Lord, as yet, to divide the sinners from the saints by His Infallible Voicewe will not expect Him, yet, to say, Depart, you cursed, and, Come, you blessed. We will not beg Him to display at once His great power and to put down all the principalities of evil with His rod of iron. We will wait and fear not! Faith is now the watchword and the order of the day. Sight is for unbelievers, but patient trust is for the saints. This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith. This it is which glorifies God and overthrows the powers of evil! Believe, and so shall you wax valiant in fight and put to flight the armies of the aliens. Believe, and so shall you be established. Ask not to see, for sight is wisely denied you. Heaven will be the brighter and eternity the more glorious because we hope for what we see not, and do with patience wait for it.

II. Secondly, I am going to give, with much solemn earnestness, AN ADAPTED INTERPRETATION SUITABLE TO BELIEVERS AT THIS PRESENT MOMENT. The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you shall not see it. That is to say, first, I call our days of holy fellowship with Jesus days of the Son of Man. And these may pass away to our deep sorrow. We have known days when our faith in Christ has been strong and real and our hearts have drawn very near to Him. Our ears have not heard Him speak and yet He has spoken into our soul. Our eyes have not seen Him and yet our heart has been ravished with His beauties! Oh, the delights, the heavenly joys which we have, then, experienced!

Perhaps I speak to some who are experiencing all that bliss at this present time and this has lasted with them for months, perhaps for years. Happy Brothers! Happy Sisters! To abide in such a state of mind as this! But cast not aside my word of jealous counsel this morning, for I speak in purest love. Take heed lest the day come when you shall desire to have one of these days, again, and not see it! While the Beloved is with you, hold Him and do not let Him go. 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 until He pleases. Remember, the Lord Jesus is a jealous Savior. He will depart if He finds you love any earthly thing more than Himself. He will hide Himself if you begin to pride yourself upon your gifts and think that, surely, you must be someone or else your Lord would not so sweetly reveal Himself to you.

He will up and away, also, if you grow cold and negligent, if you despise the means of Grace and especially if you decline in private prayer and if His Word shall become a dry bone to you. Ah, when the Lord is gone, what a vacuum remains in the soul! It is the best thing I can say for itI hope that the dreary vacuum will be mourned over and lamented. I hope that the heart will never rest till Jesus returns, but mourn and lament

*Where is the blessedness I knew   
In union with my Lord?   
Where is my hearts refreshing view   
Of Jesus and His Word?*

But, Beloved, the Lord Jesus need not go and you need not depart! He will abide with you even as He did with the disciples at Emmaus when they constrained Him, if you are but eager for His company. He will pitch His tent with you and be no more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home! Only take heed that you grieve Him not by sin and He will remain with you till the day breaks and the shadows flee away! And you shall evermore abide in His love and your soul be filled with His joy.

But take the kindly warning of this morning, for if you walk loosely, carnally, carelessly, proudly, forgetfully, the days shall come when you shall wish for one of the days of the Son of Man and you shall not see it. Turn the text another way, and learn again. Beloved Friends, we have enjoyed days of delightful fellowship with one another as well as with our Lord. In the days of the Son of Man the disciples were so united in heart that when He had ascended, they were all with one accord in one place. Now, it is a great joy for Believers when we are all knit together in love and when Christian brotherhood is a matter of fact and not of mere talk. Those are blessed days when the family circle is gracious, when husband and wife and children can speak together of the things of God and there is no division or coldness at home.

Those are happy times when your bosom friends are Christs bosom friends! When those with whom you talk familiarly hold converse with God. It is no small bliss to go up to the House of God in company with those who keep holy day and to feel that they are of one mind with us in the things of God. Happy is it, also, for us when in the Church there is undivided fellowship in prayer, when everybody seems to be in a praying frame of mindwhen there is fellowship in praise and eyes glance joy to eyes with a delight that is common because of the Lords blessingwhen there is fellowship and agreement, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one Spirit is in all and upon all. Those are, indeed, the days of the Son of Man! Something like this we have known for yearsby His Grace these days have been common with us.

Brothers and Sisters, I hope we shall never know the loss of them, but we easily may. The Church may soon allow her fellowship to be broken. And how? Why, some do a world of mischief in this matter by denying that there is any fellowship at all and asserting that love and zeal have died out. Did I hear a Brother say that there is very little Christian love nowadays? You are a very good judge of yourself, Brother, for remember you are speaking for yourself! Another says, Oh, Christian fellowship. I never see any. Very likely, Brother. Again I say you are speaking for yourself and you are the gentleman who is likely to put an end to anything like fellowship in others by your acid spirit and bitter talk.

In other ways, also, joyful fellowship may be wounded. Let there be a lack of holy walking, a lack of zeal, or an absence of humility. Let there arise in the Church the desire in each one to be the greatest, and let there be small care about the Glory of God. Let every man become proud and lifted up and there will soon be an end of Christian fellowship! Do you, dear Brother, neglect private prayer and become as cold as an iceberg? Wherever you go you will chill other peopleand there will be frosts wherever you are found. It is one of the easiest things in the world, when the devil and a knot of prejudiced people agree about it, to spoil the fellowship of the saints! But if we labor that love may be promoted and increased, we shall not have to sigh for the days of the Son of Man without finding them, but they shall be continued to us all our lives.

Again, certain times may be aptly called the days of the Son of Man when there is abundant life and power present in the Church of God. We know what this means in this Church. I wish we knew it more fully. And we know what the contrast means by having observed many dead and decaying Churches. What wretched communities some Churches are, where the soul of religion is absent! There is a company of people called a Christian Church and a man called a minister who gives them a pious essay every Sunday morning. And they go in and out and go homeand there is an end of the whole thing! Meanwhile their neighbors are perishing for lack of knowledge, but they care nothing. The heathen are dying without Christ, but they heed it not. So much is given to the cause of God as must be paid out of sheer necessity for the maintenance of outward ordinances, but there is no zeal, no consecration, no fervor of love. May we never come down to this!

O my Beloved, I long to see among us yet more and more abundantly, the spirit of Divine life, energetic life, fervent, self-denying lifelife which consumes everything to achieve Gods Glory! Beloved, you have this and may have more of it, but you may also lose it. Life and power may soon depart! Pastor and people may, alike, sleep in spiritual sloth! And then, at such times, the power, having gone from the Church, its energy is no longer felt among the unconverted. A living Church grasps with a hundred hands all that comes near to it! It is a mighty soul-saving institution, which, with its far-reaching nets, draws thousands from the sea of death! A living Church attracts even the Sabbath-breaker and awakens the infidel. It startles those whom it does not save. When the Church is in this state, her converts are plenteous! Then her teaching and preaching are with power and the Truth of God pushes down its adversaries.

I have been in my inmost soul bowed before the Lord with awful dread lest these days of the Son of Man which we have enjoyed in great measure so long should be taken away from us. I tremble lest we should go to sleep and do nothing! I am alarmed lest there should be no conversions and nobody caring that there should be any and yet, everything seeming to be prosperous. I know that people may be growing more respectable and appearing to be more pious than ever they were, and yet everything may be going backwards! God forbid that the dry rot of indifference should seize upon the heart of the Church while she yet appears to be sound and

strong! Before that occurs may God be pleased to take me Home!

Many of you wish the same for yourselves, and well you may, for I trust that we have lived too long in the atmosphere of zeal to be able to endure the cold, frigid condition of a careless Church! Yet it would soon be our lot if the Spirit of God were withdrawn. O Holy Spirit, do not depart from us! While His power is with us, Brothers and Sisters, let us be all at it and always at it, with our whole souls serving the Lord Jesus, and so the cloud of blessing shall be long detained. Again, The days will come, when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man. This may be true with regard to a powerful ministry, for in the days of the Son of Man the Gospel was faithfully preached by Christ and His Apostles and Evangelists.

It is not for me to exalt my office, if by that I am supposed to imply any exaltation of myself. But still, I believe that to any Church and people, an earnest, plain, simple, faithful ministry is a blessing of untold value. Yet the Lord may readily take it away from His Church, or He may paralyze its power so that it may no longer be a blessing. This you well know. The Lord may in anger take the candlestick out of its place and then what would happen? Death may silence the earnest tongue and there will be mourning. He who was a spiritual nursing father and a leader in Israel may be removed, and what then? Are we sufficiently thankful for ministers and pastors while we have them? Are not many of the faithful taken away because they have never been valued as they ought to have been? Gods servants are precious in His sight and He would not have us despise them.

It may be that in this land of ours, in years to come, Gospel ministers will become scarce enough. If the popery which now abounds in the Church of England is to go on increasing, the day may come when the voice of Christian ministry will be silenced by Law and persecution allowed to rage. For, be not deceived, Rome has not changed her views! Just let her once get power, again, and all the penal laws will be re-enacted and you Protestants who are today flinging away your liberties as dirt cheap, will rue the day in which you allowed the old chains to be fitted upon your wrists. Popery fettered and slew our sires and yet we are making it the national religion! Or if it should never come to be a matter of Law that ministries should be silenced, yet they may become fewer and fewer, till a little child may number them.

We have none too many faithful ministers of Christ even now, but even these may be called away. The Lord may say to this guilty people, You did not hear them while you had them. Behold, I will call back My Prophets and my messengers. You did not regard them when they cried morning and noon and night unto you, and bade you lay hold on Jesus Christ and be saved and, therefore, behold, I will remove your teachers and take them away from you, and you shall not see their faces anymore. Are you prepared for this? What are Sabbaths to some Christians I know of but days of bitter disappointment? They go to their places of worship as a matter of duty, but they are not fed, nor comforted, nor stirred up! They gather no Divine encouragement! They find no influences in the ministry to help them on their way.

Are there not hundreds of unedifying preachers and hundreds of congregations where the Sunday service is a weariness and a misery? God grant you may never have to mourn and lament the happy days in which the Gospel was preached among you in simplicity and earnestness! But remember, if they are not valued, they may speedily come to an end. Infirmities of body and frequent sicknesses are not only admonitions to the preacher but to his hearers, also.

III. My last promise was to give A MEANING ADAPTED TO THE UNCONVERTED. To them let me say these two or three things. To some of you, now present, who have heard the Gospel for years and yet have rejected it, my text will, one day, become solemnly true. The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you shall not see it. Perhaps you will emigrate. You will wander into the backwoods of America or into the bush of Australia where the sound of Church bells will never again reach youwhere ministers and sermons and services will be unfamiliar things.

Then it may be you will say, Would to God I had used my Sabbaths while I had them, and that I had constantly heard the Gospel when I might. Or if you should remain in England, yet in a certain time, shorter or longer, you will lie upon the bed of sickness. And it will become clear to all around that it is your last bed and your last sickness. And then you will begin to say, O God, are there no more Sabbaths for me? No more preaching of the Gospel for me? Oh, that I had them over again! Will you not, then, be willing to give all that you possess to be able, once again, to hear the voice of Gods minister proclaiming pardon through the blood of Jesus? You know you will!

At such a time it may be there will be an end to the emotions which you now occasionally feel, for oftentimes Gods arrows stick fast in your conscience and you are wounded. There will be no arrows to wound you, then, with tender wounds of hopeful penitence, but remorse will tear you with poisoned fangs! You will be going down to Hell filled with hardness of heart! Emotions, which you aforetime quenched, will not come back. You resisted the Spirit and He will leave you to yourself. And yet there will be enough, perhaps, of conscience left to make you wish that you were again at some of those earnest meetingsthat you could, again, feel as once you felt when you were almost persuaded to be a Christian!

At such times, it may be, you will look back upon your mothers entreaties with great remorse and wish she could be at your bedside to love you again and weep over her dying child. Ah, you will say, would God Mother could speak to me about Jesus as she once did, but she is gone. And sisters and friends that once, you said, worried you about religion, you will wish for them, also, but they are gone. They will never worry you anymore with their Psalm singing! You will never again be tired, and wearied, and bored with their entreaties! You may be sure about that, for they are in Heaven, and you are dying without hope! You are going down to the grave, now, and will never again have to complain of dull Sundays and prosy ministers! You will not be annoyed with street preachers and missionaries. No more warnings, no more entreaties, no more prayers, no

more revival services!

You are now passing into another region. I wonder whether you will be of a different mind towards these things from what you are now? Will you, then, remember my warnings and call yourselves fools for rejecting them? I am but giving you an outline of what I wanted to have said, and said with much more earnestness, but I do beseech you think over these things, yourself, in the quiet of your room this afternoon. Within a short time there will be an end to all the opportunities and means of Grace you now enjoy. Within a short time, at the very longest, there will be an end of all exhortations, invitations, warnings, entreaties and, it may be when they come to an end you will wish to have them back again.

Would it not be far better that you should use them now? Escape and find life in Christ, for the lamp of life shall never be kindled, again, to give you a second opportunity! While yet Mercys gate stands open, enter in and find eternal life, for if it is once shut, it will never move upon its hinges again, and you shall be shut out, world without end! God grant His blessing upon these feeble words, for Jesus sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Luke 17:20-37; 18:1-14.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK136, 914, 972.

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REMEMBER LOTS WIFE   
NO. 1491

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 24, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Remember Lots wife.   
Luke 17:32.**

IT was the purpose of God always to maintain a testimony for truth and righteousness in the midst of this ungodly world. For this end of old He set apart for Himself a chosen family with whom He had fellowship. Abraham was the man whom God chose, that in him and in his household the witness might be preserved. This chosen family was called out and separated from its ancestors and led to dwell apart as wayfaring men in the land of Canaan. They were not to go into the cities and mingle with other races, but to dwell in tents, as a separate tribe, lest their character should become polluted and their testimony should be silenced. It was the Lords intent that the people should dwell alone and not be numbered among the nations.

Abraham, being called, obeyed and went forth, not knowing where he went. His separated life gave great exercise to his faith and so strengthened it that it became a calm, unstaggering assurance and this enabled him to enjoy a quiet, sublime and happy career, dependent only upon God and altogether above as well as apart from man. With him was his nephew, Lot, who also left Haran at the Divine call and shared with the Patriarch his wanderings in Canaan and in Egypt. He was not a man of so noble a soul, but was greatly influenced by the stronger mind of his Uncle Abraham. He was sincere, no doubt, and is justly called righteous Lot, but he was more fit to be a follower than a leader. He also sojourned in tents and led the separated life until it became necessary for him to become an independent chieftain because the flocks and herds of the two families had so greatly multiplied that they could not well be kept together.

Then came out the weak side of Lots character. He did not give Abraham the choice in selecting a sheep walk, but like all weak natures, he selfishly consulted his own advantage and determined to go in the direction of the cities of the plain of Jordan where well-watered pastures abounded. This led to his dwelling near the cities of the plain, where crime had reached its utmost point of horrible degradation. We read that he pitched his tent toward Sodom. He found it convenient to be near a settled people and to enter into friendly relations with them, though he must have known what the men of Sodom were, for the cry of them had gone forth far and wide. Thus he began to leave the separated path.

After a while he went further, for one step leads to another. He was a lover of ease and, therefore, he gave up the tent life, with its many inconveniences, and went to live with the townsmen of Sodoma thing to be wondered at as well as deplored. He did not cease to be a good man, but he did cease to be a faithful witness for his God. Abraham seems to have given him up altogether from that day, for we find that noble Patriarch enquiring of the Lord concerning his heir, saying, Lord God, what will

You give me, seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And the Lord said, This shall not be your heir. Now, this enquiry would have been needless had Lot been still reckoned to belong to the chosen seed, for naturally Lot was the heir of Abrahambut he forfeited that position and gave up his portion in the inheritance of the elect house by quitting the separated life.

Lot, although he dwelt in Sodom, was not happy there. Neither did he become so corrupt as to take pleasure in the wickedness of the people. Peter says that God delivered just Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. He tried to bear his protest in the place, but signally failed, as all must do who imitate him. His witness for purity would have been far more powerful if he had kept apart from them, for this is the protest which God demands of us when He says, Come you out from among them, be you separate. In the midst of the world, which lies in the Wicked One, Lot lived onnot without greatly degenerating in spirituntil the kings came and carried him away captive. Then by the intervention of Abraham he was delivered from the captivity which threatened him and brought back again.

This was a solemn warning and you would have thought that Lot would have said, I will go back to Abrahams way of living. I will again become a sojourner with God. Sodoms walls without God are far less safe than a frail tent when God is a wall of fire around it. His vexation with the conversation of the lewd townsmen ought to have made him long for the sweet air of the wild country, but it was not so. He again settles down in Sodom and forgets the holy congregation which clustered around the tent of Abraham. Being, still, a man of God, he could not be allowed to die in such societyit was not to be endured that just Lot should lay his bones in the graveyard of filthy Sodom.

If God would save a man, He must fetch him out from the worldno man can remain part and parcel of an ungodly world and yet be Gods elect one, for this is the Lords own words to the enemy at the gates of EdenI will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. Did He not also say to Pharaoh, I will put a division between My people and your people? The Lord will sooner burn all Sodom down than Lot shall continue to be associated with its crimes and dragged down by its evil spirit. And so it came to pass that Lot was forced outhe was placed in such a strait that he must either run for his life or perish in the general burning.

Happy had it been for him if he had lived all the while in the holy seclusion of Abraham. He would not, then, have lost the inheritance for his seed, nor have passed away under a dark, defiling cloud, nor have missed his place among the heroes of faith of whom Paul writes in the famous chapter of HebrewsThese all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Here I must pause, or you will think that I have misread my text and that I am preaching from the wordsRemember Lotand, indeed, I might profitably do so, for there is much of warning in the history of Lot himself. If Christian men are so unwise as to conform themselves to the world, even if they keep up the Christian character in a measure, they will gain nothing by worldly association but being vexed with the conversation of the ungodlyand they will be great losers in their own souls their character will be tarnished, their whole tone of feeling will be lowered and they themselves will be wretchedly weak and unhappy. Conformity to the world is sure to end badly sooner or laterto the man himself it is injurious and to his family ruinous.

But the text says, Remember Lots wife and, therefore, I must let the husband go and call your attention to her, who, in this case, is his worse half. When the time for separation arrived, Lots wife could not tear herself away from the world. She had always been in it and had loved it and delighted in it. Though associated with a gracious man, when the time came for decision, she betrayed her true character! Flight without so much as looking back was demanded of her, but this was too muchshe did look back and thus proved that she had sufficient presumption in her heart to defy Gods command and risk her allto give a lingering loveglance at the condemned and guilty world. By that glance she perished.

That is the subject of our discourse. The love of the world is death. Those who cling to sin must perish, whoever they may be. Do not omit to notice the connection of the text, for there our Lord bids us hold the world with a loose hand and always be ready to leave it all. When we are called to it, we are to be ready to go forth without a particle in our hands. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him, likewise not return back. They were not to hold life, itself, dear, but to be ready to lay it down for His sake, for He said, Whoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

To be divided from the worldits possessions, its maxims, its motives is the mark of a disciple of Christ and, in order to keep up the feeling of separateness among His followers, our Lord bade them, Remember Lots wife. She is to be a caution to us all, for God will deal with us as with her if we sin as she did. The thing which has been is the thing which shall be. If our hearts are glued to the world, we shall perish with the world! If our desires and delights look to the world and if we find our comfort in it, we shall have to see our all consumed and shall be ourselves consumed with it in the day of the Lords anger. Separation is the only way of escapewe must flee from the world or perish with it!

Depart you, depart you, go you out from there, touch no unclean thing; go you out of the midst of her; be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.

I. Remember Lots wife. And our first point shall beREMEMBER THAT SHE WAS LOTS WIFE. She was the wife of a man who, with all his faults, was a righteous man. She was united to him in the closest possible bonds and yet she perished! She had dwelt in tents with holy Abraham and seemed to be a sharer in all the privileges of the separated people and yet she perished! She was dear to one who had been dear to the father of the faithful and yet, for all that, she perished in her sin!

This note of warning we would strike very loudly, for, commonplace as the truth is, it needs often to be repeated that ties of blood are no guarantees of Divine Grace. You may be the wife of the saintliest man of God and yet be a daughter of Belial. Or you may be the husband of one of the

Kings daughters and yet be, yourself, a castaway! You may be the child of a prophet and yet the curse of the prophets God may light upon you! Or you may be the father of a most gracious family and yet still be an alien to the commonwealth of Israel. No earthly relationship can possibly help us if we are personally destitute of the spiritual life.

Our first birth does not avail us in the kingdom of God, for that which is born of the flesh is, at its very best, flesh, and is prone to sin and will certainly perish. We must be born again, for only the new birth, which is of the Spirit and from above, will bring us into Covenant bonds. O you children of godly parents, I beseech you look to yourselves that you be not driven down to Hell from your mothers side! O you relatives of those who are the favorites of Heaven, I beseech you look to yourselves that you die not within sight of Heaven in spite of all your advantages! In this matter, remember Lots wife.

Being Lots wife, remember that she had, since her marriage, shared with Lot in his journeys and adventures and trials. We cannot tell exactly when she became Lots wife, but we are inclined to the belief that it was after he had left Haran, for when Abraham left Haran we read that he took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brothers son, but we do not read of Lots wife. The name of Abrahams wife is given, but of Lots wife there is no mentioning whatever. Again, we read, Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Lot, also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. But nothing is said about his having a wife.

She must have been a person of very small consideration, for even when it is certain that Lot was married, when he was taken captive and afterwards rescued by Abraham, all we find is thisAnd Abraham brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. We suppose that Lots wife is included under the word, the women. Now the Holy Spirit never puts a slight upon good womenin connection with their husbands they are generally mentioned with honorand in this book of Genesis it is specially so.

Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel have each an honorable memorial and as no mention is made of Lots wife we may infer that she was not worthy to be mentioned. She could hardly have been an inhabitant of Sodom, as the Jewish traditions asserts, unless she was a widow, as they say, and the daughters mentioned were hers by a previous marriage. For at the destruction of Sodom, Lot had marriageable daughters and it would not seem that Lot had then been separated from Abraham for many years. True, the women of Sodom may have been given in marriage at an earlier age than was usual with the Abrahamic stock and, if so, Lots wife may have been a native of Sodom, for it is possible that he dwelt there for 20 years.

More probably, however, either in Canaan or in Egypt, Lot married a Canaanite or an Egyptian womana person utterly unworthy to be taken into the holy household and, therefore, the marriage is not recorded. It was the custom of that elect and separated family, as you know, to send back to Padanaram to fetch from there some daughter of the same house, that the pure stock might be preserved and that there might be no connection with the heathen. It was Abrahams desire for Isaac and he charged his steward to carry it out, saying, And I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the whole earth, that you shall not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but you shall go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

This also was Isaacs desire for Jacob, for we read, And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel your mothers father; and take you a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mothers brother. It seems to me that Lot had married a heathen woman and so her name is omitted. Whether it is so or not, it is certain that she had shared with Lot in the capture of the city of Sodomshe had seen the ruthless sword slay the inhabitants and she, herself, with her husband, had been among the captivesand she had been delivered by the good sword of Abraham. So you see that she had been a partaker of her husbands trials and deliverance and yet she was lost.

It will be a sad, sad thing if there should come an eternal severance between those united by marriage bondsthat we should live together, work together, suffer together and should be delivered, by the Providence of God, many a time togetherand should see our children grow up together and yet should be torn asunder at the last, never to meet again! This is a prospect which we dare not think upon. Tremble, you whose love is not in Christ, for your union will have an end! What says the Savior? I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. It matters not how close the association, the unbeliever must be divided from the living child of God! If you cling to the world and cast your eyes back upon it, you must perish in your sin, notwithstanding that you have eaten and drunk with the people of God and have been as near to them in relationship as wife to husband, or child to parent. This makes the remembrance of Lots wife a very solemn thing to those who are allied by ties of kindred to the people of God.

Lots wife had also shared her husbands privileges. Her husband had not forgotten his association with Abraham and he could not have failed to communicate this knowledge to her. The one God was worshipped and Lots wife was present. She knew of the gracious Covenant which God had made with His separated people and she knew that her husband was one of the families. She had apparently cast in her lot with the chosen people of God though her heart was not in it but she, nevertheless, joined their sacred songs and their holy prayers. She saw the daily provision which God made for His people and the joy which Abraham had in abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. Even in Sodom her husband kept up such separateness as he could in such an evil place and she saw the goodness of the man with all his mistakes.

When Sodom must be destroyed, the angels came to their house and she, herself, helped to entertain them. She received the merciful warning to escape as well as her husband and she was urged as much as he to flee from the wrath so near at hand. Thus is it with many of you who are enjoying all sorts of Christian privileges and are yet unsaved! You come to the Lords Table and eat and drink of the memorials of His body and

bloodand yet you remain unsaved. You seem to be part and parcel of the Church of God and if there is any privilege or advantage, a share of it is set before you. If there is any fellowship you are not excludedif there is any joy it is not denied you. You will have to say at last, Lord, Lord, we have eaten and drunk in Your Presence and You have taught in our streets, and, oh, how wretched it will be to hear Him say, I never knew you! Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. It must be so if your souls are clinging to sin and you are casting a yearning eye to the ungodly world! It must be so and if you need proof, remember Lots wife.

Lots wife had shared in her husbands errors. It was a great mistake on his part to abandon the outwardly separated life, but she had stayed with him in it and, perhaps, was the cause of his so doing. I suppose he thought he could live above the world spiritually and yet mingle with its votaries, even as some now do who enter into worldly company and yet hope to walk with God in spirit. He said to himself, It is very uncomfortable to wander alone in this deserted wilderness and to dwell in these temporary tents. I wish I had a more abiding dwelling and could mingle on peaceable terms with those around me. He ceased to look for the city which has foundations whose Builder and Maker is God and he wanted to take up citizenship in the world. I should not wonder if Lots wife influenced him in that way. He was a man of weak mind and while his uncle had him under his wing, he was right enough, except that even then he had what a writer calls, a lean-to religionhe did not stand alone, but leaned upon Abraham.

When he was married it is probable that his wife assumed the ruling place and guided the way of his life. She began to think that it was a pity that the family should live in such separation, so unfashionable, so rigid, so peculiar and all that. She tossed her head and cried, Really, people must mix with society and not keep up old-fashioned, strait-laced ways! You might as well be dead as be shut out from life. When her husband had an opportunity of getting out of that rigid style by leaving his uncle, she said she would like to go down Sodom way because it would be nice for the girls and give them a taste of something liberal and refined. The old style was all very well for such an antiquated couple as Abraham and Sarah, but Lot and herself belonged to a younger generation and were bound to get into a little society and find eligible matches for their young people. It would be well for them to dress better than they could learn to do if they always kept roaming about like gypsies.

You see, Abrahams people did not study the fashions at all and were a very vulgar sort of shepherds who had no ideas of refinement and politeness. And it was pity that people in Lots station in life should always associate with mere sheep-shearers, drovers and the like. If they got to Sodom there would be nice parties, dances and all sorts of things! Of course the people were a little loose and rather fastthey went to plays where modesty was shocked and gathered in admiration around performers whose lives were openly wantonbut then you see one must be fashionable and wink at a good deal! We cannot expect all people to be saints and, no doubt, they have their good points. By some such talk Mistress Lot gained her husband over to her way of thinking.

They did not mean to actually go into the worst society of Sodom, but they intended to make a careful selection and go only a little way. Surely they could be trusted to know where to stop. So they pitched the tent towards Sodom where it was within an easy walk of the towna little separated, but not far. If anything did happen that was very bad they could move away and no harm would be donebut until they saw the harm of it they liked the neighborhood and the ways of the townsfolk. It was no doubt wise, they said, to go and see Sodom and know the people, for it would be ridiculous to condemn what they had not seen! They would therefore try it and give the young people some idea of what the world was like.

Very sweet the city life became. The free and easy ways of Sodom came to be enjoyable. Not the gross part of Sodom lifeLot could not bear thatand it made Mistress a bit uncomfortable at times, but the liberal spirit, the fine free bearing of the people, their gaiety and artistic culture were quite to her mind and so she was right glad when her husband put away the old tent, had a sale of the sheep and lived as a retired grazier in the west end of the city. I think I am not mistaken in the conjecture that Mistress Lots influence brought her husband there and when there, introduced him to the best families and found suitors for the daughters who had been fully imbued with the liberal ideas of the place. At any rate, whatever were Lots faults, she was a partaker in them. She was with him in the choosing the plain of Jordan; with him in the pitching of the tent towards Sodom; with him in actually settling in Sodom and I could almost hope with him in bearing as good a protest as they could against the vilest of Sodoms sinsbut certainly with him in giving up the strictness and severity of the separated life.

Yet at last she was separated from him forever! For his errors, notwithstanding their grievous mischief to him, did not utterly destroy the life of God in his soul. As for her, she never had any spiritual life and now, when she is called to leave Sodom, she shows her love to it by a distinct disobedience to God and an open turning to the doomed city. And so she perishes. Oh, you that are Christian people because your friends are Christian people! You that associate with us because it happens to be the way in which you were brought up! The time will come when the secret attachment of your hearts towards a giddy world will show itself most clearly and in a fatal moment you will give a look of love towards sin which will prove you do not belong to the people of God! Then will it happen to you according to the word of the Apostle, It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

II. And now, secondly, Remember Lots wife and remember that SHE WENT SOME WAY TOWARDS BEING SAVED. Mistress Lot so far believed the message that came to her about the destruction of the city that she was awakened. She rose early as her husband did and she prepared to leave the house. She ran down the streets; she passed the city gate; she reached the open plain along with her husband. She was willing, for a while, to run with him, following his example. She did so for a considerable distance till she began to think over what she was doing and to consider what she was leaving. And then she slackened her pace and lingered behind.

Remember, then, that she did go part of the way towards safety and yet she perished! And so many may go part of the way towards Christ and they may go a little way out of the worldbut if their hearts still linger with the ungodly, they will perish, notwithstanding all. There is one very solemn thought and that is that the angels hand had pressed her wrist. When they said, Up, get you gone and Lot lingeredthe men laid hold upon his hand and the hand of his wife. So it is expressly said. An angels hand had pressed her wrist to draw her forth to safety and she had gone a little way under that sacred constraintand yet she perished.

Some of you may have had spiritual touches upon the conscience and heart which you will never be able to quite forget and the responsibility of this will cling to you, though you have drawn back from godliness and your heart cries after vanity and lusts after its idols. This woman was actually out of Sodom and she was almost in Zoar, the refuge city, and yet she perished! How near she was to the little city of escape, I cannot tell, but she was certainly almost there and yet she perished. Almost saved, but not quite. Let me repeat those words, for they describe some of you who are present at this hourand they may be your epitaph if you do not mind what you are aboutALMOST SAVED, BUT NOT QUITE. Escaped from the vilest form of sin, but not truly in Christ! The mind not weaned from its idols, iniquity not given up in the soul, though perhaps given up in outward deed!

O you who are ALMOST SAVED, BUT NOT QUITE, Remember Lots wife.   
III. This brings me to a third point of remembrance, which is this remember that though she went some way towards escape, SHE DID ACTUALLY PERISH THROUGH SIN. The first sin that she committed was that she lingered behind. Moses tells us, Lots wife looked back from behind him. That is, the good old man was making such haste as he could, but she, though she had run side by side with him, lingered in the rearI should not wonder but what the same angel had one of them by the right hand and the other by the left while the other angel brought the two daughters on behind. But Lots wife slackened her pace and fell behind.

That is the first sin with most people who profess religion, but are not true to Godthey begin to backslide by creeping along very slowlythey are not half so earnest as they used to be, so they lag behind. One service a day is sufficient. A very little reading of the Bible contents them. They do not quite give up the appearance of prayer, but still there is very little of it. They do not see the good of being in such a fury over religion. They do not see why they should exercise any sacred violence to take the kingdom by force. They linger. It is because, after all, the world is master of their hearts! They would, if they dared, be as worldly and as ungodly as othersand they finally prove their true character by slackening their pace.   
Having slackened her pace, the next thing she did was she disbelieved what had been told her. You must remember that their flight out of Sodom was to be an act of faith, for the angel said, Look not behind you. That Sodom was to be destroyed did not appear at all likely, for it was a bright morning. They were to fly with as much haste as if they could see the fire-shower falling, but they were not to see it. Their flight was to be urged forward by faith in the angels words. Faith may be as well exhibited by not looking as by looking. Faith is a look at Christ, but faith is a not looking at the things which are behind. Lots wife saw the sun rising, so we are toldthe sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.   
She saw the bright dawning and everything lit up with it and it came across her mindIt cannot be true! The city is not being destroyed. What a lovely morning! Why are we thus running away from house, goods, friends and everything else on such a bright, clear morning as this? She did not truly believethere was no real faith in her heartand therefore she disobeyed the law of her safety and turned her face towards Sodom. Yet, mark you, she had received the angels in her house; she had seen them blind the wicked mob around her door; she had heard their majestic words of persuasion and felt their kind compulsionshe had plenty of evidence that God was speakingbut she doubted the truth of His Word and here was the very essence of her sin!   
What if some of you that have mingled with the godlyand have been numbered with them and have participated in their worship, should nevertheless come short because of unbelief? It is by no means improbable, for out of all that came out of Egypt there were only TWO that entered into Canaan! They could not enter in because of unbelieftheir carcasses fell in the wilderness. May it never come to pass with any of us that we shall leave our carcasses outside of the eternal hope because we, too, do not believe in Him who is invisible, but must walk according to the sight of the eyes! Having gotten so far as lingering and doubting, her next movement was a direct act of rebellionshe turned her headshe was told not to look, but she dared to look.   
Rebellion is as much seen in the breach of what appears to be a little command as in the violation of a great precept. Our fall at the first came from the plucking of forbidden fruitand this womans death came by a look! Take care of little things. There is life in a look and here is a case in which there was death in a look. She looked, but why did she look? I suppose it was thisher heart was that way. She loved Sodom and she abhorred the separated life. She had led her husband and her children away from the peculiar people of God, for she felt that she would rather mix with the reprobate multitude than with the chosen few! She was not of the spirit that could walk with God, aloneshe clung to society and to sin. Though she was running for her life, she thought of her household stuff and of the ease of Sodomand she looked back with lingering eyes because she wanted to be there.   
And it came to this, that as her eyes went back, her whole body would have gone back if time had been allowed. She already lingered. She would have soon turned. That one glance betrayed which way her soul was going! A little thing in professors may show what they are and we may readily betray the inward turning of the soul by an act as simple as that of turning the neck to look towards Sodom. This was her sin. Now, dear Friends, let us remember Lots wife, each one of us, by learning a personal lesson. Here is a hard thingwe must go outside the camp or utterly fail. Can you maintain the life of God and walk with Christ and be separate from the world?   
Many of you cannot. You may pretend to do so, but you cannot, it is beyond you. I fear that the number of true Christians in the world is very much less than we suppose. We are encumbered with a host of people who call themselves Christians, but are as much of the world as other peoplewhose inheritance is in the world, whose pleasure is in the world, whose speech is worldlyand who are altogether of the world. And because they are of the world the world loves its own and, therefore, there is little or no strife between them and the world! Alas, I fear the Church is not true to itself and, therefore, the world begins to love it. It says, You have come to live with us and do as we do. You do not bear your awkward protests as you used to do and so we need not to burn you as we did your fathers. You are hail fellows well with us and, therefore, we will treat you kindly.   
Only let as live as Christ lived and we shall find the dogs of this world howling at us as they used to do at our forefathers! My Hearers, can you live the separated life? If you can, God help you and bless you in it! But if you cannot, remember though you do not so go into Sodom as to indulge in its most gross sins, yet the very looking at it, the wishing for it, the desiring to be there shows where your heart is and your hearts tendency is your true character. You will be judged according to the going of your heart. If your heart goes toward the mountain to escape and if you have desired to be with Christ to be His separated follower, you shall be saved.   
But if your heart still goes after evil and sin, his servants you are whom you obey and from your evil master you shall get your black reward!   
IV. Here comes our remembrance of Lots wife in the fourth and most solemn place and that isremember that HER DOOM WAS TERRIBLE. Remember Lots wife. Remember that she perished with the same doom as that which happened to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah but that doom befell her at the gates of Zoar. Oh, if I must be damned, let it be with the mass of the ungodly having always been one of them! To get up to the very gates of Heaven and to perish there will be a most awful thing! To have lived with Gods people. To have been numbered with them and to be joined to them by ties of bloodand then, after all, to perishwill be horrible, indeed! To have heard the Gospel. To have felt the Gospel, too, in a measure, and even to have amended ones life because of it. To have escaped from the filthiest corruption of the world and to have become moral, amiable, excellent and yet to still not have been weaned from the world, not to have been divorced from sin and so to perishthe thought is intolerable!   
That same brine and brimstone which fell upon the inhabitants of the four cities overtook Lots wife! She was on the margin of the shower and as it fell she was salted with tarshe was turned into a pillar of salt where she stood! Dreadful doom! On the verge of mercy to be slain by justice! On the brink of salvation to be the victim of eternal wrath! This came upon her all of a sudden, too. What a picture! She stops as she is fleeing she turns her head! She scarcely looks! The gaze is not long enough to single out her own houseand, lo, she is turned into a pillar! The fire-salt has fallen on her! She will never move again! She had not time to start or turn and, with her neck just as it was, she stands as a statue of salta warning to all who should pass that way.   
I do not suppose Lots wife to be standing there now, as some travelers have imaginedthe pillar was not even there in Christs day, for if it had been, as Bengel very properly remarks, our Lord would have said, See Lots wife. But as she was not there, He said, Remember her. Her doom came all of a sudden, without a further warning or a moments time to consider. What if sudden death should strike some of you down at this moment? You professors who still love the worldwhat if you now fell dead? You professed Christians who sneak in among the ungodly to have a suck at their pleasures, suppose you should be struck down in the theater one of these days! You that pretend to be Christians and frequent the dance saloonssuppose you should fall dead there! It would not be a new thing under the sun, for God deals severely with those who profess to come under His CovenantHe has jealous laws for those who join His Church and yet have not the Grace of God in their hearts.   
These men die not the death of common men, but are often overtaken by strange punishments that the world may see that the Lord has set a wall of fire around His Church which none may break through on peril of their lives. Ananias and Sapphira entered the Church, but they could not live therea glance of Peters eyes and they fell dead before him! Such judgments still purge the ranks of the professing Church as all that observe must know, for the Lord will be sanctified of them that come near to Him. For this cause, says the Apostle, some are sickly among you, and many sleep, because the discipline of God goes on in the midst of His visible Church. He lets the world alone till the fire-shower comes, but to those that profess to be His people, He is always a jealous God. I speak strong thingsstrong things are needed in these compromising days. May the Holy Spirit impress these weighty facts on all your hearts.   
The worst point, perhaps, about the perishing of Lots wife lay in that she perished in the very act of sin and had no space for repentance given her. In the instant she turned her head she was a pillar of salt. It is a dreadful thing to die in the very

act of sinto be caught away by the justice of God while the transgression is being perpetrated! Yet such a thing may happen and let those who profess to be Christians and yet parley with sin, remember Lots wife and how swift God is to deal out His judgment against professors who betray His holy name and cause. I cannot help going back to the text I started with, which was one of my own making, and that is, Remember Lot. Though Lot himself was a righteous man and escaped from the doom of the wicked city, yet I cannot help tracing the death of Lots wife, in some degree, to her husband.   
When a man walks with God and imitates God, he gets to beget characterthat is Abraham. When a man walks with a holy man and imitates him he may rise to be a good character but he will be a weak onethat is Lot. But when one walks with Lot, the weak character, and only copies him, the result will be a failurethat is Lots wife. It is like the boys copy book. If he will copy the top line, the boy makes an Abraham line. But if the next time he does not look at the top line, but imitates the second that makes a Lot linevery far short of the first. If he next copies No. 3, the Lot line, the result will be a poor affairthat is Lots wife. Beloved, we are to live having the perfect Father for our example, looking and following in His steps! And if we do so by the power of the Spirit, we shall reach a grand, noble, Abrahamic character.   
But suppose you get to imitate some good man and he is your standard? You will make a second-rate Christian! It will be a weak affair, like Lot. And then if your wife and children get to copying you, oh, the mischief that must come of it! Lot ought to have been firmer, more steadfast, more thorough. He had no business going to Sodom. If he had said to his wife, No, my Wife, we belong to a chosen people. God called us out of Haran and away from the gods of our fathers that we might live a separated life. And here I am going to stay and you must stay with me, she would have had to obey, or else if she had not done so, Lot was not to do evil to please his wife. She could not have learned the ways of Sodomshe might have given her heart, still, to the world, but she could not have been so clearly mixed up with it and her daughters could not have been so evil as they were if he had resolved to live apart from the towns people.   
I Believe that fathers and husbands ought to take the lead in the management of their families and parents are bound to arrange their households after a godly fashion. Do not say, Oh, we cannot manage our families. You must do it! Eli failed in this and, instead of being firm, he timidly said, Do not do this, my sons. Poor dear old Elihe did not like to get into trouble with his sons by finding fault with them. But what did his softness cost him? The Lord smote his family because he had not ordered his household aright. If Christian men leave their families to go anyway they choose, they will soon find the Lord has a quarrel with them. And if the children and if the wife should, after all, perish, it will be a horrible thought for the head of the household, even if he is a saved man, that it was his ill example which caused their ruin.   
It was partly Lots own doing that his wife became what she was. If Lot had never gone to Sodom, his wife would not have perished near it. Look to yourselves lest you lead others astray! Keep near to God and you will be blessed and become a blessing to others. Abraham did not have this trouble with Sarah, nor Isaac with Rebekah, for they walked with God and their influence was felt in their tents. Live near to God and let your own life be according to the command which God gave the PatriarchWalk with Me and be you perfect, and you shall see that He will bless your household and your children after you.   
But if you do not thus walk before the Lord, you will have to remember Lots wife. May God add His blessing on these words, for Jesus sake. Amen.

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Sermon #856 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW   
NO. 856

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 21, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And He spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint, saying, There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says. 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. Luke 18:1-8.**

REMEMBER that our Lord did not only inculcate prayer with great earnestness, but He was Himself a brilliant example of it. It always gives force to a teachers words when his hearers know that he carries out his own instructions. Jesus was a mighty Prophet both in deed and in word, and we read of Him, Jesus began both to do and to teach. In the exercise of prayer, cold mountains and the midnight air witnessed that He was as great a Doer as a Teacher. When He exhorted His disciples to continue in prayer and to pray without ceasing, He only bade them follow in His steps. If any one of all the members of the mystical body might have been supposed to need no prayer, it would certainly have been our Covenant Head, but if our Head abounded in supplication, much more ought we, the inferior members!

He was never defiled with the sins which have debased and weakened us spiritually. He had no inbred lusts to struggle with. But if the perfectly pure drew near so often unto God, how much more incessant in supplication ought we to be! So mighty, so great and yet so prayerful! O you weak ones of the flock, how forcibly does the lesson come home to you! Imagine, therefore, the discourse of this morning is not preached to you by me, but comes fresh from the lips of One who was the great master of secret prayer, the highest paragon and pattern of private supplicationand let every word have the force about it as coming from such a One.

We turn at once to our text and in it we shall notice, first, the end and design of the parable. Secondly, we shall have some words to say upon the two actors in it, whose characters are intentionally so described as to give force to the reasoning. And then, thirdly, we shall dwell upon the power which in the parable is represented as triumphant.

I. First, then, consider our LORDS DESIGN IN THIS PARABLEMen ought always to pray and not to faint. But can men pray always? There was a sect in the earlier days of Christianity who were foolish enough to read the passage literally and to attempt praying without ceasing by continual repetition of prayers. They, of course, separated themselves from all worldly concernsand in order to fulfill one duty of life neglected every other! Such madmen might well expect to reap the due reward of their follies.

Happily there is no need in this age for us to duplicate such an error! There is far more necessity to cry out against those who, under the pretense of praying always, have no settled time for prayer at all and so run to the opposite extreme. Our Lord meant, by saying men ought always to pray, that they ought to be always in the spirit of prayeralways ready to pray. Like the old knights, always in warfarenot always on their steeds dashing forward with their lances in position to unhorse an adversary but always wearing their weapons where they could readily reach them and always ready to encounter wounds or death for the sake of the cause which they championed. Those grim warriors often slept in their armor. So even when we sleep, we are still to be in the spirit of prayer, so that if perhaps we wake in the night we may still be with God.

Our soul, having received the Divine influence which makes it seek its heavenly center, should be evermore naturally rising towards God Himself. Our heart is to be like those beacons and watchtowers which were prepared along the coast of England when the invasion of the Armada was hourly expected, not always blazing, but with the wood always dry and the match always therethe whole pile being ready to blaze up at the appointed moment. Our souls should be in such a condition that ejaculatory prayer should be very frequent with us. No need to pause in business and leave the counter and fall down upon our kneesthe spirit should send up its silent, short, swift petitions to the Throne of Grace.

When Nehemiah would ask a favor of the king, you will remember that he found an opportunity to do so through the kings asking him, Why are you sad? But before he gave him an answer he says, I prayed unto the King of Heaven. Instinctively perceiving the occasion, he did not leap forward to embrace it, but he halted just a moment to ask that he might be enabled to embrace it wisely and fulfill his great design in it. So you and I should often feel, I cannot do this till I have asked a blessing on it. However impulsively I may spring forward to gain an advantage, yet my spirit, under the influence of Divine Grace, should hesitate until it has said, If Your Spirit goes not with me, carry me not up.

A Christian should carry the weapon of all-prayer like a drawn sword in his hand. We should never sheathe our supplications. Never may our hearts be like an unloaded gun, with everything to be done to it before it can thunder on the foe! But it should be like a primed cannon, loaded and ready, only requiring the fire that it may be discharged. The soul should be not always in the exercise of prayer, but always in the energy of prayer. Not always actually praying, but always intentionally praying. Further, when our Lord says men ought always to pray, He may also have meant that

the whole life of the Christian should be a life of devotion to God

*Prayer and praise, with sins forgiven,*

*Bring down to earth the bliss of Heaven.*   
To praise God for mercies received both with our voices and with our actions, and then to pray to God for the mercies that we need, devoutly acknowledging that they come from Himthese two exercises in one form or other should make up the sum total of human life.

Our life psalm should be composed of alternating verses of praying and of praising until we get into the next world, where the prayer may cease and praise may swallow up the whole of our immortality. But, says one, we have our daily business to attend to. I know you have, but there is a way of making business a part of praise and prayer. You say, Give us this day our daily bread, and that is a prayer as you utter it. You go off to your work and as you toil, if you do so in a devout spirit, you are actively praying the same prayer by your lawful labor. You praise God for the mercies received in your morning hymn. And when you go into the duties of life and there exhibit those Graces which reflect honor upon Gods name, you are continuing your praises in the best manner.

Remember that with Christians to labor is to pray, and that there is much truth in the verse of Coleridge

*He prays best who loves best.*   
To desire my fellow creatures good and to seek after it. To desire Gods Glory and so to live as to promote it is the truest of devotion. The devotion of the cloisters is by no means equal to that of the man who is engaged in the battle of life. The devotion of the nunnery and the monastery is at best the heroism of a soldier who shuns the battlebut the devotion of the man in business life who turns all to the Glory of God, is the courage of one who seeks the thickest of the fray and there bears aloft the grand old standard of Jehovah-Nissi! You need not be afraid that there is anything in any lawful calling that need make you desist from vital prayer!

But, oh, if your calling is such that you cannot pray in ityou had better leave it! If it is a sinful calling, an unholy calling, of course, you cannot present that to God! But any of the ordinary avocations of life are such that if you cannot sanctify them, it is a lack of sanctity in yourself and the fault lies with you. Men ought always to pray. It means that when they are using the lap stone, or the chisel. When the hands are on the plow handles, or on the spade. When they are measuring out the goods. When they are dealing in stockswhatever they are doingthey are to turn all these things into a part of the sacred pursuit of Gods Glory. Their common garments are to be vestments. Their meals are to be sacraments. Their ordinary actions are to be sacrifices and they themselves a royal priesthood, a peculiar people zealous for good works.

A third meaning which I think our Lord intended to convey to us was thismen ought always to praythat is, they should persevere in prayer. This is probably His first meaning. When we ask God for a mercy once, we are not to consider that now we are not further to trouble Him with it, but we are to come to Him again and again. If we have asked of Him seven times, we ought to continue until 70 times seven. In temporal mercies there may be a limit and the Holy Spirit may bid us ask no more. Then must we say, the Lords will be done. If it is anything for our own personal advantage, we must let the Spirit of submission rule us, so that after having sought the Lord thrice, we shall be content with the promise, My Grace is sufficient for you, and no longer ask that the thorn in the flesh should be removed.

But in spiritual mercies and especially in the united prayers of a Church, there is no taking a no for an answer! Here, if we would prevail, we must persist! We must continue incessantly and constantly and know no pause to our prayer till we win the mercy to the fullest possible extent. Men ought always to pray. Week by week, month by month, year by yearthe conversion of that dear child is to be the fathers main plea. The bringing in of that unconverted husband is to lie upon the wifes heart night and day till she gets it! She is not to take even 10 or 20 years of unsuccessful prayer as a reason why she should ceaseshe is to set God no times nor seasonsbut so long as there is life in her and life in the dear object of her solicitude, she is to continue, still, to plead with the mighty God of Jacob.

The pastor is not to seek a blessing on his people occasionally and then in receiving a measure of it to desist from further intercessionhe is to continue vehemently without pause, without restraining his energiesto cry aloud and spare not till the windows of Heaven are opened and a blessing is given too large for him to house! But, Brethren, how many times we ask of God and have not because we do not wait long enough at the door? We knock a time or two at the gate of Mercy and as no friendly messenger opens the door, we go our ways. Too many prayers are like boys runaway knocksgiven and then the giver is away before the door can be opened. O for Divine Grace to stand foot to foot with the Angel of Godand never, never, never relax our holdfeeling that the cause we plead is one in which we must be successful, for souls depend on it, the Glory of God is connected with it, the state of our fellow men is in jeopardy!

If we have given up in prayer our own lives and the lives of those dearest to us, yet the souls of men we cannot give up! We must urge and plead again and again until we obtain the answer

*The humble suppliant cannot fail   
To have his needs supplied,   
Since He for sinners intercedes   
Who once for sinners died.*

I cannot leave this part of the subject without observing that our Lord would have us learn that men should be more frequent in prayer. Not only should they always have the spirit of prayer and make their whole lives a prayer and persevere in any one object which is dear to their souls, but there should be a greater frequency of prayer among all the saints. I gather that from the parable, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

Prayerfulness will scarcely be kept up long unless you set apart times and seasons for prayer. There are no times laid down in Scripture except by the example of holy men, for the Lord trusts much to the love of His people and to the spontaneous motions of the inner life. He does not say, Pray at seven oclock in the morning every day, or pray at night at eight, or nine, or 10, or eleven. He says, Pray without ceasing. Yet every Christian will find it exceedingly useful to have his regular times for retirement, and I doubt whether any eminent piety can be maintained without these seasons being very carefully and scrupulously observed.

We read in the old traditions of James the Apostle, that he prayed so much that his knees grew hard through his long kneeling. And it is recorded by Fox, that Latimer, during the time of his imprisonment, was so much upon his knees that frequently the poor old man could not rise to his meals and had to be lifted up by his servants. When he could no longer preach and was confined within stone walls, his prayers went up to Heaven for his country, and we in these times are receiving the blessing! Daniel prayed with his windows open daily and at regular intervals. Seven times a day, says one, will I praise You. David declared that at, evening and morning, and at noon, would he wait upon God. O that our intervals of prayer were not so distant, one from the other! Pray that God will grant us Grace that on the pilgrimage of life the wells at which we drink are more frequent!

Our Lord means, to sum up the whole, that Believers should exercise a universality of supplicationwe ought to pray at all times. There are no canonical hours in the Christians day or week. We should pray from cockcrowing to midnight, at such times as the Spirit moves us. We should pray in all circumstancesin our poverty and in our wealth, in our health and in our sickness, in the bright days of festival and in the dark nights of lamentation. We should pray at the birth and pray at the funeral. We should pray when our soul is glad within us by reason of abundant mercy and we should pray when our soul draws near unto the gates of death by reason of heaviness. We should pray in all transactions, whether secular or religious. Prayer should sanctify everything.

The Word of God and prayer should come in over and above the common things of daily life. Pray over a bargain. Pray over going into the shop and coming out again. Remember in the days of Joshua how the Gibeonites deceived Israel because Israel enquired not of the Lord. Be you not deceived by a specious temptation, as you may well be if you do not daily come to the Lord and say, Guide me! Make straight a plain path for my feet and lead me in the way everlasting. You shall never err by praying too much! You shall never make a mistake by asking Gods guidance too often! But you shall find this to be the gracious illumination of your eyes, if in the turning of the road where two paths meet which seem to be equally right, you shall stay a moment and cry unto God, Guide me, O great Jehovah. Men ought always to pray. I have enlarged upon it from this pulpitgo and expound it in your daily lives.

II. In enforcing this precept, our Lord gives us a parable in which there are TWO ACTORS, the characteristics of the two actors being such as to add strength to His precept. In the first verse of the parable there is a judge. Now, here is the great advantage to us in prayer. Brethren, if this poor woman prevailed with a judge whose office is stern, unbending, untender, how much more ought you and I to be instant in prayer and hopeful of success when we have to supplicate a Father!

Far other is a father than a judge. The judge must necessarily be impartial, sternbut the father is necessarily partial to his child, compassionate and tender to his own offspring. Does she prevail over a judge, and shall not we prevail with our Father who is in Heaven? And does she continue in her desperate need to weary him until she wins what she desiresand shall not we continue in the agony of our desires until we get from our heavenly Father whatever His Word has promised? In addition to being a judge, he was

devoid of all good character. In both branches he failed. He feared not God. Conscience was seared in himhe had no thoughts of the great Judgment Seat before which judges must appear.

Though possibly he had taken an oath before God to judge impartially, yet he forgot his oath and trod justice under his feet. Neither did he regard man. The approbation of his fellow creatures, which is very often a power, even with naturally bad men either to restrain them from overt evil, or else to constrain them to righteousnessthis principle had no effect upon him. Now, if the widow prevailed over such a wretch as this! If the iron of her importunity broke the iron and steel of this mans stubbornness, how much more may we expect to be successful with Him who is righteous and just and goodthe Friend of the needy, the Father of the fatherless, and the Avenger of all such as are oppressed?!

O let the Character of God, as it rises before you in all its majesty of truthfulness and faithfulness, blended with loving kindness and tenderness and mercy, excite in you an indefatigable ardor of supplication, making you resolve with this poor woman that you will never cease to supplicate until you win your case! The judge was a man so unutterably bad that he even confessed his badness to himself, with great contentment, too. Without the slightest tinge of remorse, he said within himself, Though I fear not God, neither regard man. There are few sinners who will go to this length. They may neither fear God nor regard men, yet still they will indulge in their minds some semblance of that which is virtuous and cheat themselves into the belief that, at least, they are not worse than others.

But with this man there was no self-deception. He was as cool about this avowal as the Pharisee was concerning the opposite, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are. To what a brazen impertinence must this man have come! To what an extent must he have hardened his mind, that knowing himself to be such, he yet climbed the judgment seat and sat there to judge his fellow men! Yet the woman prevailed with this monster in human form who had come to take pleasure in his own wickedness and gloated in the badness of his own heart! Over this man importunity prevailedhow much more over Him who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all? How much more over Him whose name is Love, whose Nature is everything that is attractive and encouraging to such as seek His face? As we look at him, the more evil this judge appears, and he could scarcely have been painted in blacker colors, the more does the voice of the Savior seem to say to us, Men ought always to pray and not to faint.

Note with regard to the character of this judge that he was one who consciously cared for nothing but his own ease. When at last he consented to do justice, the only motive which moved him was, lest by her continual coming she weary me. She stun me, might be the Greek worda kind of slang, I suppose, of that period, meaning lest she batter me, she bruise me, and as some translate it, blacken my face with her incessant constant battering. That was the kind of language he useda short quick sentence of indignation at being bothered, as we should say, by such a case as this! The only thing that moved him was a desire to be at ease and to take things comfortably.

O Brothers and Sisters, if she could prevail over such a one, how much more shall we speed with God whose delight it is to take care of His children? Who loves them even as the apple of His eye! This judge was practically unkind and cruel to her, yet the widow continued. For awhile he would not listen to herthough her household, her life, her childrens comfortwere all hanging upon his will. He left her by a passive injustice to suffer. But our God has been practically kind and gracious to usup to this moment He has heard us and granted our requests. Set this against the character of the judge, and surely every loving heart that knows the power of prayer will be moved to incessant importunity!

We must, however, pass on, now, to notice the other actor in the scenethe widow, and here everything tells again the same wayto induce the Church of God to be importunate. She was apparently a perfect stranger to the judge. She appeared before him as an individual in whom he took no interest. He had possibly never seen her before. Who she was and what she wanted was no concern to him. But when the Church appears before God she comes as Christs own bride. She appears before the Father as one whom He has loved with an everlasting love. And shall He not avenge His own elect, His own chosen, His own people? Shall not their prayers prevail with Him, when a strangers importunity won a suit of an unwilling judge?

The widow appeared at the judgment seat without a friend. According to the parable, she had no advocate, no powerful pleader to stand up in the court and say, I am the patron of this humble woman. If she prevailed, she must prevail by her own ardor and her own intensity of purpose. But when you and I come before our Father, we come not alone, for

*He is at the Fathers side,   
The Man of love, the Crucified.*

We have a Friend who ever lives to make intercession for us! O Christian, urge your suit with holy boldness! Press your case, for the blood of Jesus speaks with a voice that must be heard! Be not, therefore, faint in your spirit, but continue instant in your supplication. This poor woman came without a promise to encourage her, no, with the reversewith much to discourage! But when you and I come before God, we are commanded to pray by God Himself, and we are promised that if we ask it shall be given us, if we seek we shall find!

Does she win without the sacred weapon of the promise and shall not we win who can set the battering rams of Gods own Word against the gates of Heavena battering ram that shall make every timber in those gates quiver? O Brethren, we must not pause nor cease a moment while we have Gods promise to back our plea! The widow, in addition to having no promise whatever, was even without the right of constant access. She had, I suppose, a right to clamor to be heard at ordinary times when judgment was administered, but what right had she to dog the judges footstepsto waylay him in the streets, to hammer at his private doorto be heard calling at nightfall, so that he, sleeping at the top of his house, was awakened by her cries?

She had no permission so to importune, but we may come to God at all times and all seasons! We may cry day and night unto Him, for He has bid us pray without ceasing! What? Without a permit is this woman so incessant? And with the sacred permissions which God has given us and the encouragement of abounding loving kindness, shall we cease to plead? She, poor soul, every time she prayed, provoked the judge! Lines of anger were on his face. I doubt not he foamed at the mouth to think he should be wearied by a person so insignificant! But with Jesus, every time we plead we please Him rather than provoke Him! The prayers of the saints are the music of Gods ears

*To Him theres music in a groan,*

*And beauty in a tear.*   
We, speaking after the manner of men, bring a gratification to God when we intercede with Him. He is vexed with us if we restrain our supplications. He is pleased with us when we draw near constantly. Oh, then, as you see the smile upon the Fathers face, children of His love, I beseech you faint not, but continue, still, without ceasing to entreat the blessing!

Once more, this woman had a suit in which the judge could not be himself personally interested. But ours is a case in which the God we plead with is more interested than we are! For when a Church asks for the conversion of souls, she may justly say, Arise, O God, plead Your own cause. It is for the honor of Christ that souls should be converted! It brings Glory to the mercy and power of God when great sinners are turned from the error of their ways! Consequently we are pleading for the Judge with the Judgefor God we are pleading with God! Our prayer is virtually for Christ as through Christ, that His kingdom may come and His will may be done.

I must not forget to mention that in this womans case she was only one. She prevailed though she was only one! And shall not God avenge His own elect, who are not one, but tens of thousands? If there is a promise that if two or three are agreed it shall be done, how much more if in any Church hundreds meet together with unanimous souls anxiously desiring that God would fulfill His promise? These pleas cast chains around the Throne of God! How they, as it were, hem in Omnipotence! How they constrain the Almighty to arise out of His place and come in answer to His people, and do the great deed which shall bless His Church and glorify Himself!

You see, then, whether we consider the judge, or consider the widow, each character has points about it which tend to make us see our duty and our privilege to pray without ceasing.

III. The third and last pointTHE POWER WHICH, ACCORDING TO THIS PARABLE, TRIUMPHED. This power was not the womans eloquence, I pray you avenge me of my adversary. These words are very few. They have the merit of being very expressive, but he that would study oratory will not gather many lessons from them. I pray you avenge me of my adversary.

Just eight words. You observe there is no plea, there is nothing about her widowhood, nothing urged about her children, nothing said about the wickedness of her adversary, nothing concerning the judgment of God upon unjust judges, nor about the wrath of God upon unjust men who devour widows housesnothing of the kind. I pray you avenge me of my adversary. Her success, therefore, did not depend upon her power in rhetoric, and we learn from this that the prevalence of a soul or of a Church with God does not rest upon the elocution of its words, or upon the eloquence of its language!

The prayer which mounts to Heaven may have but very few of the tail feathers of adornment about it, but it must have the strong wing feathers of intense desire! It must not be as the peacock, gorgeous for beauty, but it must be as the eagle, for soaring aloft, if it would ascend up to the seventh heavens. As a rule, when you pray in public, the shorter the better. Words are cumbersome to prayer. It often happens that an abundance of words reveals a scarcity of desires. Verbiage is generally nothing better in prayer than a miserable fig leaf with which to cover the nakedness of an unawakened soul.

Another thing is quite certain, namely, that the woman did not prevail through the merits of her case. It may have been a very good casethere is nothing said about that. I do not doubt the rightness of it, but still, the judge did not know nor care whether it was right or wrong. All he cared about was that this woman troubled him. He does not say, She has a good case and I ought to listen to it. No, he was too bad a man to be moved by such a motivebut, she worries methat is all. I will attend to it. So in our suitin the suit of a sinner with God, it is not the merit of his case that can ever prevail with God. You have no merit! If you are to win, Anothers merit must stand instead of yours and on your part it must not be merit but misery. It must not be your righteousness but your importunity that is to prevail with God!

How this ought to encourage those of you who are laboring under a sense of unworthiness! However unworthy you may be, continue in prayer. Black may be the hand, but if it can but lift the knocker, the gate will open! Yes, though you have a palsy in that hand. Though, in addition to that palsy, you are leprous and the white leprosy is on your forehead, yet if you can but tremblingly lift up that knocker and let it fall by its own weight upon that sacred promise, you shall surely get an audience with the King of kings! It is NOT eloquence! It is NOT merit that wins with Godit is nothing but IMPORUNITY!

Note with regard to this woman, that the judge said first she troubled him. Next he said, she came continually and then he added his fear, lest she weary me. I think the case was somewhat after this fashion. The judge was sitting one morning on his bench and many were the persons coming before him asking for justicewhich he was dealing out with the impartiality of a villaingiving always his best word to him who brought the heaviest bribes. When presently a poor woman uttered her complaint. She had tried to be heard several times, but her voice had been drowned by others. But this time it was more shrill and sharp and she caught the judges eye. My lord, avenge me of my adversary!

He no sooner sees from her poverty-stricken dress that there are no bribes to be had, than he replies, Hold your tongue! I have other business to attend to. He goes on with another suit in which the fees were more attractive. Still he hears the cry again, My lord, I am a widow, avenge me of my adversary. Vexed with the renewed disturbance, he bade the usher put her out because she interrupted the silence of the court and stopped the public business. Take care she does not get in again tomorrow, he says, she is a troublesome woman. Long before the morrow had come, he found out the truth of his opinion.

She waited till he left the court, dogged his footsteps and followed him through the streets, until he was glad to get through his door, and bade the servants fasten it lest that noisy widow should come in, for she had constantly assailed him with the cry, Avenge me of my adversary. He is now safely within doors and bids the servants bring in his meal. They are pouring water on his hands and feet. His Lordship is about to enjoy his repast, when a heavy knock is heard at the door, followed by a clamor, pushing and a scuffle. What is it? he asks. It is a woman outside, a widow woman, who wants your Lordship to see justice done her. Tell her I cannot attend to her, she must be gone.

He seeks his rest at nightfall on the housetop, when he hears a heavy knock at the door and a voice comes up from the street beneath his residence, My lord, avenge me of my adversary. The next morning his court is open, and, though she is forbidden to enter, like a dog that will enter somehow, she finds her way in and she interrupts the court continually with her plea, My lord, avenge me of my adversary. Ask her why she is thus importunate and she will tell you her husband is dead and he left a little plot of landit was all they had and a cruel neighbor who looked with greedy eyes upon that little plot, has taken it as Ahab took Naboths vineyard. And now she is without any meal or any oil for the little ones and they are crying for food.

Oh, if their father had been alive, how he would have guarded their interests but she has no helper and the case is a glaring one. And what is a judge for if he is not to protect the injured? She has no other chance, for the creditor is about to take away her children to sell them into bondage. She cannot bear that. No, she says, I have but one chance. It is that this man should speak up for me and do me justice. And I have made up my mind he shall never rest till he does so. I am resolved that if I perish, the last words on my lips shall be, Avenge me of my adversary. So the court is continually interrupted. Again the judge shouts, Put her out! Put her out! I cannot conduct the business at all with this crazy woman here continually dinning in my ears a shriek of, Avenge me of my adversary. And it is no sooner said than done.

But she lays hold of the pillars of the court so as not to be dragged out and when at last they get her in the street, she does but wait her chance to enter again. She pursues the judge along the highways. She never lets him have a minutes peace. Well, says the judge, I am worried out of my very life. I care not for the widow, nor her property, nor her children. Let them starve, what are they to me? But I cannot stand this, it will weary me beyond measure. I will see to it. It is done and she goes her way. Nothing but her importunity prevailed.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, you have many other weapons to use with God in prayer, but our Savior bids you not neglect this master, allconquering, instrument of importunity! God will be more easily moved than this unjust judge if only you are as importunate as this widow was. If you are sure it is a right thing for which you are asking, plead now! Plead at noon! Plead at night! Plead onwith cries and tears spread out your case! Put your arguments in order! Back up your pleas with reasons! Urge the precious blood of Jesus! Set the wounds of Christ before the Fathers eyes! Bring out the atoning sacrificepoint to Calvaryenlist the crowned Prince, the Priest who stands at the right hand of God! And resolve in your very soul that if Zion does not flourish, if souls are not saved, if your family is not blessed, if your own zeal is not revived, you will die with the plea upon your lips and with the importunate wish upon your spirits!   
Let me tell you that if any of you should die with your prayers unanswered, you need not conclude that God has disappointed you. With one story I will finish. I have heard that a certain godly father had the unhappiness to be the parent of some five or six most graceless sons. All of them, as they grew up, imbibed infidel sentiments and led an evil life. The father, who had been constantly praying for them and was a pattern of every virtue, hoped at least that in his death he might be able to say a word that should move their hearts. He gathered them to his bedside, but his unhappiness in dying was extreme, for he had lost the light of Gods Countenance and was beset with doubts and fears. And the last black thought that haunted him was, Instead of my death being a testimony for God, which will win my dear sons, what if I die in such darkness and gloom that I shall confirm them in their infidelity and lead them to think that there is nothing in Christianity after all?

The effect was the reverse. The sons came round the grave at the funeral and when they returned to the house, the eldest son thus addressed his brothersMy brothers, throughout his lifetime our father often spoke to us about religion and we have always despised it. But what a sermon his deathbed has been to us! For if he, who served God so well and lived so near to God found it so hard a thing to die, what kind of death may we expect ours to be who have lived without God and without hope? The same feeling possessed them all, and thus the fathers death had strangely answered the prayers of his life through the Grace of God.

You cannot tell but what, when you are in Glory, you should look down from the windows of Heaven and receive a double Heaven in beholding your dear sons and daughters converted by the words you left behind. I do not say this to make you cease pleading for their immediate conversion, but to encourage you. Never give up prayer, never be tempted to cease from it. So long as there is breath in your body and breath in their bodies, continue to pray, for I tell you that He will avenge you speedily though He bear long with you. God bless these words for Jesus sake. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 18:1-30.*   
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WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?   
NO. 2519

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MAY 30, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTTOBER 22, 1885.

**Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.   
Luke 18:1.**

MY mind alights with great joy upon the simple Truth of God which gleams on the very surface of our textthen, man may pray! If men ought to pray, they may pray. Whatever a man ought to do, it is clear that he has the right and the privilege to doand though this may seem a very common-place truth to those of us whose hearts are at ease through faith in Jesus and who enjoy daily communion with God in prayeryet there is an exquisite sweetness about this fact to a man who fears that he may not pray. He has come into such a miserable state of heart that he feels as if he could not pray and he fears that he may not pray. Satan tells him that the door of mercy is shut against him, that his day of Grace is over and that the time of hope for him is now past and gone. But our text says, Men ought always to pray. Then, men may always pray!

Your knees may be bent before the altar of God, though they are stained through many a fall into sin. Though it is many years since you ever thought of praying, yet you may pray! Though, perhaps, you have even denied that there is a God, still you may pray! Though you have ridiculed the very notion of prayer, you may prayGod does not refuse to you the permission to come to His Mercy Seat. Though you have committed every crime in the catalog of sin, you may pray. And though you have gone on in those crimes and involved yourself yet more and more deeply in iniquity, you may pray! Though you are within a few days of death and of damnation unless the Grace of God shall visit you, yet you may pray! It is clear that you may pray because men ought always to pray, and what they

ought to do they may do! Grasp that Truth of God, O despairing one, and grip it fast, and say to your despair, Get away from me! It is not possible that I am denied the right of praying unto the Lord while such a text as this still stands in Holy Writ, Men ought always to pray.

Now, look at the text again, and lay stress upon the first word of it Men ought always to pray. I feel so grateful to the Holy Spirit that this text does not say, Saints ought always to pray, because then I might ask myself, Am I a saint? And, perhaps, I might have to answer, No, I am far from it. But the text does not say, saints, and it does not even say, Tender-hearted, penitent persons who are in a very gracious state ought always to pray. No, there is no description of character given in the textfor which I am deeply grateful. Those exhortations that leave the character as wide as possible are all the more full of Grace and condescending love!

Who ought always to pray, then? Men. And the word, men, is generic and includes the race. Men. That is, men and women and childrenold men and fathers, young men and maidensall who belong to the race of mankind ought always to pray! Perhaps you say, So-and-So is not a good man. No, but he is a man, and men ought always to pray! He is a long way from being a commendable man, a man of mark, a man of note, a nobleman in the truest sense of that term. Ah, but he is a man, and men ought always to pray! Go down the back streets into the dark alleys where there are men who scarcely seem to be men, and women who are scarcely women, and tell even them that they are still included under this head, Men ought always to pray. Go upstairs and stand by the bed where Death has his victim by the throatthe man yet living is still a manthat poor creature lying there is not yet a corpse, but still a man! Say to him, Men ought always to pray. They who curse and swear ought always to pray. They who live without any regard for God, or even in disbelief of His existence, and detestation of His Gospel, yet they ought always to pray! And, as I said at the beginning, the ought implies a permission, for, what a man ought to do, he may do and, therefore, whoever you may be, if you are in the shape of a man, you ought to pray!

If you have a head on your shoulders and lungs that heave, and a heart that palpitatesif you are still in the land of the living and can be numbered among the sons of mento you this text rings out a grand and glorious Gospel! Even though it seems to be put in the form of a Law of God by the use of that stern word, ought, yet it really is in the form of the Gospelyou may pray if you are either man or woman, if you are of the race of mankind, for, men ought always to pray.

Oh, that some poor heart might catch at this sweet Word of God! That woman talked of throwing herself over London Bridgeyet even she may pray! That man thought of crossing the Atlantic and hiding himself from his fellow men, leaving his kith and kin to get away from the place where he has dishonored his name. Do not think of such a thing, my dear Sir, but pray, for you may pray! There is not in Heaven or earth anything that forbids you to pray! There is an act of amnesty and oblivion passed in the court of God and you are not excepted from it. There is no Book Inspired of Him that denies you a place at the Mercy Seat! There is no messenger sent of God who will say to you, Thus says the Lord, You shall not pray, but, on the contrary, bringing before you the living and Inspired Word of the living Christ of God, we say to you, Men ought always to pray! Therefore you ought to pray and, therefore, you may pray!

Now let us turn the text around a little and put the emphasis on another word. Men ought always to pray. Therefore, men may pray now. If they ought always to pray, they ought to pray now, and if they ought to pray now, they may pray now! Is not that a precious, blessed Truth of God? Here you sit, poor Sinner, and I am talking to you. Never mind that very respectable person who is sitting next to you. I am not, just now, thinking of her, I am not speaking to himI mean you, poor, sad, guilty one! Perhaps you say, I do not feel in a state of mind in which I can pray. I hardly know why I came in here. I am very sad, I am very troubled, I am very sinful, I am very hard-hearted. But, my dear Friend, you may pray! Let me stop a minute. In this solemn silence, you may breathe your first prayer to God. May God help you, my poor Brother, to say for the first time, God be merciful to me, a sinner! May He help you, my dear Sister, who has lived so long without prayer, to say now, Lord, receive me, and forgive me, and let me be Your daughter, Your child, henceforth and forever!

Do you not see this? If menand you are in that categoryif human beings ought always to pray, then they may always pray! And, always, must include this present moment! So you may pray now! You ought to pray now, for you are in the list of men! Therefore, pray now, for, now, must be included in the word, always. Well, someone says, I will hasten home and pray. Do not do that! Sit where you now are and let your soul breathe itself out to God. But I would like to get down on my knees. Yes, I would like that you should if it were fit and proper, but there is no need of it. Get on the knees of your soul! Many a time, when the body is on its knees, the soul is not really prayingand there is a way in which the soul can be prostrate before God even though the body stands. Even now, into the very dust I throw my own spirit before the thrice-holy God and, prostrate before Him, I pray, Lord, help some who are here to pray, now, to You! For the first time in their lives, even now, while these words are escaping from my lips, may their hearts confess their sin and cry unto You, great Father, for the exercise of Your infinite mercy! Why should it not be so? I believe that the Spirit of God is at work here at this moment and is leading some of you into this blessed act of prayer. It so, let His name be praised for it!

There is one thing more to be noticed before I plunge into the text and that is, Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Then it is clear that prayer is alwaysif it is true prayeran effectual and profitable exercise to any man who prays, for, if men ought to pray, it is plain that there is something in prayer that is helpful to the spirit, for men ought not to do that which is a mere vain and empty thing. God cannot require us to do that which will end in smoke, or which will be a mere nothing! God does not ask any of us to go and talk to the winds and whistle to the waves! There must be some reality in prayerit must be His intention to hear and to answer prayer or else He would not put it thusMen ought always to pray.

Would He give us permission to do a thing that would have no value in it, whatever? No. Would He exhort us to do it, would He command us to do it when He knew that, if we did it, it would just be a mere form? Does God send us to act like the daughters of Danaus, to fill a bottomless vessel with leaking buckets? Does He tell us, like Sisyphus, to spend our lives rolling a huge stone up the hill which will only roll back, again, upon us? Does He make fools of us? Has He spoken in secret and said to the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain? It cannot be! I hold that if God does not hear and answer prayer, it is a piece of foolery. And I cannot conceive that God would set any of us to do what would be an insane, or at least an idiotic thing. No, if men ought always to pray, there is something real in prayer and, when the Lord says that we ought to pray, it is because He stands ready to grant the desire of our hearts and to send us away with a blessing.

I. With this preface, dear Friends, we come to our text, and I notice concerning it, first, here is A PERPETUAL DUTY, OR PRIVILEGE, OR BOTH. Men ought always to pray.

It means, of course, first, that men ought to pray habitually. There should beand where the Grace of God is there will bethe habit of prayer. There will be the prayer at set times. It is necessary to mark out the plots in the garden, to keep them from the path where you walk, so that growing plants may not be trod down by the busy feet of toil. We need some set times, some little enclosures, some hours and periods marked off for prayer. These should be regularly attended to. Our private prayersit is a great loss to our souls if these are ever neglected. Our family prayersI am sure it is a grievous injury to a Christian household if it is not gathered regularly for prayer. Our prayers in the House of God among our Brothers and Sisters, too, must not be forgotten. We love the assemblies for prayerwe have given heed to the Apostolic injunction, Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is. All these things ought you to do, yet there is a habit of prayer that is higher than all this! The Jews prayed three times a day. There have been some holy men who have prayed at least seven times a day, but I take it that the man who lives near to God could not tell how many times a day he prays, for, whether he has three or seven times of special and notable prayer in word, he will have 70 times seven times in a day in which his heart speaks with God about everything that occurs. I think that it is well before every action to breathe a prayer, and during every action to breathe a prayer, and after every action to breathe a prayer.

Salt, says the Old Testament, without prescribing how much. So is it to be with prayerprayer, without prescribing how much. You can never overdo it. Possibly those matters which appear to require least prayer are the very things which require most prayer. Men ought always to pray. You do not have to leave off your business to pray, or turn aside from domestic labor or public serviceall of which must be attended to. You can do that and pray just the sameand this is the way in which Christians always should pray.

But I do not think that this text so much intends to teach the continuity of prayer as the pertinacity of prayer. I mean not so much the always praying as the keeping on praying for any particular thing that you have asked for. You are to continue to pray! Let me try and open this up a little. Men ought always to pray, that is, to pray under all circumstances. Whatever the difficulty or the trouble is, pray about it. It is a domestic troublepray about it. It is a business troublepray about it. It is a Church difficultypray about it. I wish to bear my personal witness upon this matter. I have had and I still have, more burdens to bear, I think, than any other man who livesheavy burdens, not my own, but for others and for Gods Glorythat which daily comes upon me, the care not only of this huge Church, but of so many other Churches as well. And I have found that I never have a burden of any sort but it is my wisdom at once to

*Take it to the Lord in prayer.*   
I have had burdens that have so troubled me that I have been quite baffled. I have thought my best and I have done my best, but the trouble has remained and, at last, I have taken it bodily and put it up on the shelf. And I have said to the Lord, I will never touch that trouble again, I will leave it in Your hands, my blessed Master. I believe that, generally, it has been the best mode of dealing with it, to put it entirely into His hands. There are certain things for which, after having done all else that can be done, the only remedy is prayer.

Let it be definitely accepted among us Christian people that whatever the difficulty is, whatever shape it takes, secular or sacred, Men ought always to pray, that is, they ought to pray about everything. This is the remedy that will cure all diseases. This is the sword that shall cut the Gordian knot if it cannot be untied. This is the key that fits the wards of every lock in the prison house of our sorrow. We shall get clean out if we do but know how to use the key of prayer! Men ought always to pray. There may be a Brother who is likely to make discordshall I go and battle with him? No, I will tell the Lord about himHe will deal with him better than I can. Oh, but that man has begun to preach flat heresy! Shall I have a fight with him? Well, I may controvert with him if I am driven to it, but I will first tell the Lord about him. The Lord can settle him far better than I can. Straight ahead makes the best runner. Instead of going round to the servant and trying to curry favor with him, go straight to the Master! Go at once to headquarters about everything. Men ought always to pray. Oh, to learn this lesson well!

And, dear Friends, we ought to pray under all oppositions to prayer. Sometimes we say to ourselves, Really, I could not pray about that matter. Well, then, if you cannot pray about it, do not have anything to do with itit is a sure sign that there is a leprosy in it, so touch it not! The cankerworm of Hell is in it if you cannot pray about it. Flee from it as you would from Hell, itself. It must be a foul and filthy thing if you cannot pray about it. No, Beloved, there cannot be such a thing, but, whatever seems to be in the way of your praying, believe that whenever it is hardest to pray, it is most necessary to pray! Whenever it seems to you that you cannot pray, then you must say, Now I have seven times more need to pray about this thing than I have about other matters in which prayer comes more easy to me. It is a danger signal when you cannot pray. It is the rattle of the rattlesnake when you cannot praythere must be some deadly mischief near at hand. Whatever the difficulty in prayer, you must, by the help of the Divine Spirit, break through all barriers, for you must pray.

Men ought always to pray. Then they ought to pray even if there has been a long delay in answers to their prayers. I object very greatly to the practice of some of whom I have read, who have given God a certain time limit during which they will pray. I have heard of a woman who said that she would pray for her husband for 20 years and, according to the story, at the end of 20 years he was converted, but if he had not been converted just then, it would have been at her peril to leave off prayer, even at the end of the 20 years! Our dear Brother, Mr. George Muller, has on his prayer book the name of a Brother for whom he has prayed, I think I heard him say, some 36 years. That was some years ago, so it must be a longer time than that, now, unless, indeed, the prayer has been answered. But he has the inward persuasion that this person will yet be brought to the Saviors feet and, therefore, he daily mentions the case before God in prayer. By the way, he tells us of a very admirable plan of his for booking his requests in prayer and marking them off as they are answeredand those that are not answered he lets stand until, in process of time, he finds that some of them were not proper requests and he puts that against them. But he finds that God does hear prayer and he likes to keep a record of it. If we did the same, we would have much more holy commonsense confidence in God, and our praying would be a more business-like matter as, indeed, it ought to be. But do not say to yourself, I shall pray just so long for this thing. If what you are asking for touches the Kingdom and the Glory of Christ, persevere in the prayer with this text to encourage you, Men ought always to pray.

If it is something which concerns only your own personal comfort, then Gods Spirit may teach you to limit your prayers. Concerning this thing, said Paul, I besought the Lord thrice. Yes, and then he had not the answer that he desired, but he had one with which he was perfectly satisfied! The Lord did not take away the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, but He said, My Grace is sufficient for you. Paul still had to bear the trial, but he received from the Lord the Grace to enable him to bear it! Ask with bated breath when you are asking something temporal for yourself, for you are but as a silly child in that which relates to yourself. A boy might fall in love with his fathers razors or wish to eat some delicacy that would be most dangerous to his healthand you would not have your child persisting in asking for that which would injure him! You are not angry with him for asking, for he knows no better, so you say, My child, that would not be good for you! If your son is a good child, he will not ask again, or, asking, he will not be angry if he is refused.

And, often, you know not what is good for you. If God had really put it within our reach to have whatever we chose to ask for, it would be a very dangerous power, indeed! If the Lord should say to me, You may have whatever you wish for, I would straightway get to my chamber and say, O my Father, divest me of this dangerous privilege! I ask You, of Your tender mercy, never to give me anything which Your great wisdom does not see to be good for me. Do not trust me with so dangerous a power as this! You are Omniscient and I am foolish. You are altogether good and Your will for me is better than my will for myself can ever be! Not, then, as I will, but as You will, let it be done to me. But if it is anything concerning the Kingdom of Christ, anything for the Glory of God, continue in prayer, even though it is for 50 yearsand let this little sentence cheer youMen ought always to pray.

Pray on, also, dear Friends, despite all temptations and all personal difficulties. When you feel, My prayer is dull and feeble, still pray. When Satan says, There is no use in praying about that matter, still pray. When others round about you say, It is not a fit subject for prayer, still pray. When at last it seems to be despairing work and you have to cry, Has God forgotten to be gracious.? Has He in anger shut up the heart of His compassion? still pray, for, Men ought always to pray.

II. Now I must say just a few words upon THE GROUND OF THIS OBLIGATION Men ought always to pray.   
Well, we ought always to pray because we have always some sin to confess, we have always some good thing for which to bless God and we have always some need that needs to be supplied. I must admit that I have never yet been in a condition in which I did not need to pray. He who is down in the valley needs prayer that he may be able to climb the hill. He who is up the hill needs to pray twice as much that his head may not grow dizzyand that he may not fall from his high position. He who has not should pray till he has and he who has should pray that he may be blessed in the having. If your cup is empty, pray the Lord to fill it. If your cup is full, pray God to make your hand steady that you spill not its contents. If you cannot see your way, pray God to guide you. If you can see your way, pray God to help you to follow it. Are you young? Pray God to help you against the sins of youth. Are you in the middle of life? Pray God to help you in the middle passage, where trials are so numerous. Are you almost into Heaven with age? Pray that you may enter Heaven with prayer.   
Men ought always to pray. It is always an incumbent duty for one or other of these reasons. Men ought always to pray because God commands them to pray. Pray without ceasing is a clear, clean-cut command. There is no getting over that passage, Pray without ceasing. It lies wrapped up within the heart of the First Commandment of the Law of God You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.   
Men ought always to pray. It is always the wisest thing they can do. Men ought always to pray. It is sometimes the only thing that they can do. Men ought always to pray, or else they take the matter out of Gods hands. Men ought always to pray, for they always need Gods help, whether they think they do or not.   
III. I will not go into further reasons, though there are very many for this obligation, but I shall close by noticing THE ALTERNATIVEMen ought always to pray, and not to faint. If you do not pray, you will faint.

There are some who faint fatally. They set out upon the Christian profession. Perhaps there are some here who once did that. Years ago you were a member of a churchwhere are you now? Years ago you used to speak, sometimes, on the village green in the name of Christyou do not do that now. How have you come to be where you areeither not even making a profession of religion, or certainly doing nothing in Christs service? I shall not make a guess, but I shall pronounce a certaintyyou went wrong and you began to faint in your spiritual course because you restrained prayer. You fainted because you did not pray! Ah, a religion that does not begin with secret prayer is not worth the label you put on it! A religion that is not sustained by secret prayer is a lie! A religion that does not grow through secret prayer may be puffed up, but it is not truly built up by the hand of God. No, no, young man, if you seek to join a Church, to be baptized, to come to the Communion Table and, all the while, you do not pray, your religion is but the baseless fabric of a vision and will disappear! We have had a great many men whom I have seen and known at different times who could speak very fluently and did labor in the service of God for a while, but the great mischief with them was that they did not live to God in private! If it is so with any of you, your religion may be built up very loftily, like some high tower, but it will come down very speedily because the foundations have been badly laid. You must either pray or you will faint!   
If you are a child of God, the same alternative lies before you. You will either pray or faintthat is to say, sometimes you will get bewildered. I do. I wish to do the right thing, but scarcely know which is right out of 20 things. I would deal with this Brother kindly, but with that other Brother firmly. How shall I mix firmness and kindness? If you are pastor of a Churchand you may be, my dear Friendyou know how many puzzles we have before us in dealing not only with our own poor human nature, but with the human nature of Gods people, for there is a lot of human nature even where there is spiritual natureand there are very odd ways even in good men! What are you to do in such cases? Well, if you cannot go back within the veil, and speak with the Holy Oracle, you will faint.   
I have told you before that when I was coming to London, there was a strange old man in the Prayer Meeting who, when the people were praying that I might have a blessing in going, asked the Lord that I might be helped to swallow bundles of brush crossways. That I have done many a time. Another prayed that I might be delivered from the bleating of the sheep and, for the life of me, I could not make out what he meant. I am not sure that he understood it himself, but I quite understand it now. There is no leader of the flock who will not occasionally wish to be delivered from the bleating of the sheep, for they bleat such different tunes sometimes. You may listen to the bleating of one sheep and another some, perhaps, that are not bleating in the right style, but it is a great thing to feel, Now, I am not going to be guided by the way these sheep bleat. I am set to guide them, rather than to let them guide me, but I am going to be guided by a higher voice than the bleating of the sheep, namely, the voice of the Great Shepherd. I believe that every man who seeks to win soulsand I am addressing many who are in charge of Bible classes, or at the head of Missions, or in some way serving the Lordwill faint, I am sure he willin the management of his work unless he gets right out of it sometimes into prayer and lays it all before the Lord and waits upon Him. Men ought always to pray, and not to faint in their ministry for God, in their service on behalf of the souls of their brethren. They will faint from very bewilderment if they do not pray.

And you will be sure to faint, at times, through weariness and depression of spirit, through a sense of your own powerlessness. Oh, you say, would God I could give it all up! Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest! It is a great mercy that the wings do not grow when we ask for them, for they would be of no use to uswhat should we do, flying away like doves? If God had a message for us to carry like a pigeon, He would give us the wings and then it would be right for us to fly. But what we generally mean is that we want to get away from hard work, we are looking for Saturday night. How do you like the workman who says, on Tuesday morning, O Sir, I wish it were Saturday night! And when it gets on towards Thursday, he meets you and says, Good morning, Sir, I wish it was Saturday night? Oh! I think you would say, next Saturday night will be the last I shall want to see you. You need a better workman than thatand if we get to fainting in that style, we should say to ourselves, Come, this will not do! I must go and tell the Lord all about my difficulty and my trouble. Wait upon Him for fresh strength and then you will come out as though you had bathed your face in the dew of Heaven, the Light of God had entered your eyes and you had come fresh from a vision of angels to talk with men with new tongues as the Spirit gave you utterance! Wait, I say, on the Lord, for this it is that will keep you from fainting and make you to renew your strength like the eagles!

I have come to deal with Gods people in the close of my subject, but I almost wish I had notthat I could have kept on in the first strain and talked with those who are beginning to pray. Dear Friends, do begin tonight, I pray you, with your eye on my Lord on yonder Cross, all stained with the streaks of crimson blood flowing down His precious body. Look at Him! There is life in a look at Him. Look at Him as He dies for you and you shall live! God help you to do so, for Christs sake! And when you have believed in Him, come and be baptized in His name, as these dear friends are about to be. God bless you all! Amen.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK 145 (PART 1), 978, 977. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**PSALM 145.**

I am going to preach about prayer, [the exposition was always at the beginning of the service] so we will read Davids Psalm of Praise. Thus we shall have two parts of true worship.

Verses 1, 2. 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. Notice how long David expected to praise God. He was going to praise God foreverand then after that, forever and ever. Every day will I bless Youthat is, when I do not seem to be partaking of any choice temporal blessing, I will still bless You. When I sit like Job on the dunghill, every day will I bless You; and I will praise Your name Your Character, all that has to do with You, forever and ever. The first two verses are the preface of the Psalm. Now the Psalmist begins his music.

3 *.* Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. He is great without bounds. Let Him be praised without end. There is no end to His greatness; let there be no end to our adoration.

3, 4. And His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. The fathers shall be the preachers to their sons and the sons shall be the preachers to their sons. The flaming torch of Jehovahs praise shall be passed from hand to hand all down the centuries. As long as men shall live, God shall have the praise of the godly. One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.

5. I will speak of the glorious honor of Your majesty. This is a beautiful expressionI will speak of the glorious honor of Your majesty. It is a heaped-up expression. David was in an ecstasy of delight when he wrote it. He did not know how sufficiently to express his adoration of God. Other men might praise God for themselves, but that was not enough for Davidhe must take his own turn at the blessed business! I will speak of the glorious honor of Your majesty.

5, 6. And of Your wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Your terrible acts: and I will declare Your greatness. And I will declare. Yes, in comes Davids personal note again! He cannot leave the praises of God alone, He must take his full share in this heavenly task. I wish that whenever there was work to do for God, or prayer to be offered or praise to be given to the Lord, you and I would always interject this personal pronoun, and I. You know, perhaps, dear Friends, that you never find Bartholomews name by itself in any of the Gospelsit is always somebody else and Bartholomew. It is well to be a good helper of other people. And when others are praising the Lord, it is good to come in as David did with the personal resolve and confession, and I will declare Your greatness.

7 *.* They shall abundantly utter the memory of Your great goodness. Mark every word in this choice expressionThey shall abundantly utter the memory of Your great goodness. They shall see this goodness and they shall appreciate it as great goodness! They shall remember it and so have the memory of Gods great goodness and then they shall speak of it. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness and when they have done so, they shall do it again and again! They shall abundantly utter the memory of Your great goodness.

7, 8 *.* And shall sing of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion. He has no passion, but He is full of compassion! What a mercy that is for us! Sometimes we hear persons say that God cannot do this or thatthat He cannot feel and cannot suffer. That is not true, for He can do anything that He likes. A god who has no feeling is a poor godof no service whatever to usbut the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

8. Slow to anger, and of great mercy. Oh, what a blessing it is for you and for me that He is slow to anger!   
9*.* The LORD is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works. Whether you search for the far-distant with a telescope, or peer into the minute with the microscope, the Lords tender mercies are found everywhere! Like the light, without which you see nothing, so is the mercy of Godit enlightens everything! His tender mercies are over all His works.

10. All Your works shall praise You, O Lord; and Your saints shall bless You. Standing in the inner circle, Your saints shall mingle their love with their praise and so shall bless You. Theirs shall be a choicer, more tender worship than that of all Your works besides. The works of God are like a great organ, but it is man who puts his fingers upon the keys and brings forth all the music. Man is the interpreter of the universehe praises God as the inanimate creation can never do.

11. They shall speak of the glory of Your Kingdom, and talk of Your power. I wish we did speak more of such subjects and talk more upon these sacred themes. I do not think there is ever any deficiency of talk, but I am afraid there is a very great lack of such talk as thisThey shall speak of the glory of Your Kingdom, and talk of Your power.

12. To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom. See how David keeps to the subject with which he began the PsalmI will extol You, my God, my king. Yes, and he sings about the King all through this Psalm. His great objective is to make us see that there never was such a King as the infinitely-glorious Jehovah, who surpasses all the kings of the earth!

13. Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. Other kingdoms come and go. They last during their little day and then they vanish away. Look, for instance, at the kingdom of Alexander the Great, who only reigned for about 12 years and when he died left no successor. We talk of great earthly monarchsthey are but monarchs of an hour compared with the Kingdom of Jehovah. Well might David say to Him, Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom.

13. And Your dominion endures throughout all generations. What kind of a King is this whose Kingdom is everlasting and what are the acts that make Him famous? Notice the first thing He is said to do.

14. The LORD upholds all that fall, and raises up all those that are bowed down. This is His glory! This is the majesty of the King of kings, that He takes notice of the poor and weak! The compassion of God is, to a great extent, the glory of God. That He has such tender mercies toward the unworthy is the subject of the loudest of our songs! Jehovah upholds all that fall, that is, such as would fall were it not for His upholding! Jehovah lifts up all those who have fallen and raises up those who are bowed down. Blessed be His holy name!

15. The eyes of all wait upon You. What a King is this who must feed all His subjects and who must have all His subjects depend upon Him alone! The eyes of all wait upon You.

15. And You give them their meat in due season. It is an act of Grace, not of debtYou give them their meat. Did you ever think of the vast variety of the separate sorts of food that the Lord provides for each of His creatures He has formed? The meat that feeds an elephant would not feed a lion. That which feeds a lion would not feed a sparrow. That which feeds a sparrow would not satisfy the fish of the sea. To every creature God gives its own food. You give them their meat in due season. The fruits of the earth do not ripen all at once, but the various harvests succeed each other. Notice how each of the many flowers is full of honey just at the time when the particular insect which is to come down into the flower-bell is needing that nectar to feed upon. It is marvelous to see how God has timed creation to the ticking of a watchand when the flower is ready, then comes the fly, the bee, the butterfly, or the moth that shall be fed thereby. You give them their meat in due season.

16. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. As men feed doves in their courtyard, carrying down to them their little handful of food and opening the hand to pour it out, so does God feed all living creatures readily and easily enough by the simple opening of His hand. But He does it. He satisfies the desire of every living thing and He will satisfy your desire, dear Soul, if you take it to Him. You say, perhaps, that you are very poor. Well, then, cry to Him! He has never failed His creatures, yet, and He will not fail you! He hears the young ravens when they cry and He will hear you, a man created in the image of God, when you cry to Him.

17, 18. The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His work. The LORD is near unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. As the Omnipresent Deity, the Lord is not far from any of us, but there is a peculiar nearness of God to His peoplea nearness of knowledge, a nearness of affection, a nearness of heart by which He looks upon them as His own special portion, His own peculiar heritage. Jehovah is near unto all them that call upon Him. That is the name of His peoplethey are a calling people, they are a praying peopleand they pray to Him in truth. There are some who offer the mockery of pretended prayer, but God is not near to them in the special sense in which He is near unto all them that call upon Him in truth.

19. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him. He will fulfillHe will fill fullthe desire of them that fear Him. If You fear Him, you need not fear any need! You have nothing at all that you need to fear.

19, 20. He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserves all them that love Him: but all the wicked will He destroy. These two things always go togetheras surely as the Lord does the one, He will do the other. While He preserves His saints, He will certainly destroy the wicked.

21. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord. God move us, each one, to do this! Then with the Psalmist we may fitly say   
21. And let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever.

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PRAYERFUL IMPORTUNITY   
NO. 2836

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JUNE 21, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERSHAM BAPTIST CHAPEL, IN NOVEMBER, 1857.

**And shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him, though He bears long with them? Luke 18:7.**

YOU remember this is the conclusion of the parable of the importunate widow. Her husband was dead. He had left her, perhaps, a little property, but some adversary, very probably a lawyer, seized hold of it and took from her all that she had. What was she to do? She went straightway to the judge, the appointed minister of justice in the city. The first time she went, she met with a cold repulse. She went a second timeher poverty drove her, her necessity compelled her to face the man again. Now the judge neither feared God, nor regarded man, but at last, seeing the vehemence of the woman, feeling that he should be exceedingly troubled by her constant importunity, he granted her request and he did avenge her of her adversary. Jesus used this to show the power of importunityHear what the unjust judge saidAnd if the unjust judge did this, shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him?

Now, in trying to discuss this text this evening, I shall first show what I believe to be the primary application of it. And, secondly, I shall try to enlarge upon the general principle involved in itthat importunity is very prevalent with God.

I. To begin, then, WHAT WAS THE ABSOLUTE AND CLEAREST MEANING THAT OUR SAVIOR WOULD CONVEY TO HIS DISCIPLES BY THE PARABLE?

Well, now, I think the whole sense of the parable, as far as we can make any special application of it, hinges upon the meaning of that word, avenge. What is it that Christs Church is always praying for? The answer is they are praying spiritually for that which the poor widow prayed for actuallythey are praying to be avenged of their adversary. Now what did this mean in the poor womans case? For, in some degree, it means just the same in the Churchs case. I do not believe that that poor widow, when she went to the judge, went for mere vengeances sake. I cannot conceive that our Savior would have exhibited the perseverance of malice as an example to His people. I do not think that when she applied day after day to the court of the judge, to be avenged, she applied to have her adversary punished for the mere sake of his being punished. It strikes me there was no revenge whatever in the poor womans spirit and that what she went for was simply thisher husband was dead, he had left her a little property, it was all she had to bring his babes up and support herselfsomeone had seized this property and what she needed was that the property might be restored to her.

Her request was that that which had been unlawfully taken from the weak by the mighty, might at once be taken from the clutches of the strong and restored unto the rightful owner. I think any intelligent person reading the passage would at once conceive that that was what she was seeking. Now the Church of Christ is seeking the very same thing. Those that can cry day and night in Heaven before the Throne of God do not cry out of a spirit of revenge. The saints, when they pray to God on earth and girdle the globe with supplication, do not pray against the wicked out of a spirit of hatred. God forbid that any of us should ever fall on our knees and ask God to avenge us of our adversary in the common acceptation of that phrase! I am sure there is no Christian actuated by the Spirit of Christ who would ever ask for vengeance, even on the head of the bloodiest persecutor. For if he should do so, I think the lips of Jesus might rebuke him, for we know what Jesus said when He was dyingHe did not wish to be avenged, for He saidFather, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Christs Church is seeking after just what the poor widow was seeking and we are to understand our text, Shall not God avenge His own elect? in that modified sense which the parable would convey to us. The fact is, Christs Church is a widow. It is true her Husband is alive but she is in a widowed state because He has departed from her. Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Bridegroom, was once with His people and the Church could not mourn or fast when the Bridegroom was with her. But He said, The day shall come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away, and then she shall fast. These are the daysOur Jesus has gone up on highHe is not with us in Person, nowHe has left His Church in the wilderness. It is true He has left the Comforter with her, but His own absolute, personal Presence is not vouchsafed to her. He is not yet come a second time without a Sin-Offering unto salvation. Well, then, taking advantage of the absence of Christ, the Churchs Husband, the kings, the princes, the rulers and spiritual wickedness in high places have sought to rob the Church of her rights and her privileges! And what the Church is always crying for is that God would restore her, her rightsthat He would give to her the portion which her Husband left her in His last legacy and which, in due time, when God shall have answered her prayers, He shall restore unto her. And what is that legacy?

My Brothers and Sisters, there are many things that Christ has left to His Church of which the world has robbed us. The Church was once a united Church. When Christ was in this world, His prayer was that they all might be one, even as He and His Father were One. Alas, the world has robbed us of our unity and now behold the Church cries day and night, Restore, O Lord, the scattered of Israel, and bring us into one fold, and let us have one Shepherd! The spirit of the world has crept into our midst and split us into many denominations. Gods children are not now called Christians, but they are called Baptists and Independents, Churchmen, Dissenters and such-like names of distinction. Their oneness, although it really exists in the heart, is lost, at least in the outward appearance of it and, to some degree, it is entirely lost. But the Church is crying for it every daythe true hearts in the midst of Gods Zion and the glorified spirits above are crying day without night, O Lord, make Your Church one!

Again, the Church was sent into this world to bring the world to a knowledge of the Truth of God and, one day the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. We may say that all the world is Christs, though heathenism has a part of it, Mohammed has another and the Pope another. The world is divided into different sections, under different false systems of religion, but all the world belongs by right to Christ. We can cast our eyes around the world from the river even to the ends of the earth and we can say, The kings of the isles shall bring tribute; the princes of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; kings shall yet be the nursing fathers of the Church, and queens the nursing mothers. But the world has robbed us of thisthe different false religions have spoiled the Churchs inheritance, the wild boar of the woods wastes her and devours her borders. Zions banner should wave everywhere in every kingdom, but instead thereof the priests, the kings, the idol gods have taken the kingdoms unto themselves.

Now this is the great thing, I believe, that the Church is praying for. You know the Church is one day to wear a crown. Christs Church is Christs royal bride and she is to have a crown. But she can never have it until her prayer has been heard, until her Lord comes to revenge her wrongs. For, lo, the Church of God is trampled on and despised! The precious sons of Zion, comparable unto fine goldhow are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the workings of the potter! Gods chosen people are counted as the off-scouring of all things, instead of being as, indeed they are, considered as the blood royal of the universethe princes among men! Now, because of these lost rights, Christs Church cries day and night unto God, crying out, O Lord, avenge us of our adversary, and restore unto Your widowed Church her rights!

Put the Jew wherever you may, and he will always declare that the promised land belongs to his nation. There is a pride about the Jew, wherever he may behe believes himself to still belong to that chosen family whose were the Covenants and the oracles. That is true of the Christianhe may be ever so poor, ever so despised, but knowing himself to belong to the chosen body, he claims that all things are his own. You may clothe him in fustian and you may feed him on bread and water, but he will still say, All things are mine. You may thrust him into a dungeon and let no light come to him except through iron bars, but he will still declare, Mine are the valleys and the hills! Mine by sacred rightmy Father made them all. There is a royalty in a Christian which persecution cannot burn out, which shame cannot crush, which poverty cannot root up! There it is and there it must be foreverconscious of his high rights and distinctive privileges, the Christian, the Believer, will never cease to cry unto Christ that he may yet have his rights and possess what his God gave him.

Now, dear Friends, very often we are low-spirited and down-hearted. Sometimes the Christian minister goes back from his pulpit and says, Ah, the Gospel seems to be making very little progress I do not see how the kingdoms of this earth are to belong to Christ. The Sunday school teacher goes home from his class and says, This is weary work. If things go on as they do now, we shall always have to say, Who has believed our report, and how can the Church prosper if things are so? And there are times with each of uswhen a kind of sickness seizes our spiritswe look at everything with a sad eye and we say, Ah, the millennium is many years off. Indeed, unbelief says it is quite impossible! How shall the heathen bow before Him? How shall they that dwell in the wilderness lick the dust? Now, you who have thought thus and you who are thinking so now, hear the Saviors argument for your consolation, the argument couched in the textThe Church of God is crying unto Him day and night! There where the burning lamps of Heaven perpetually light the skieshigh in the seventh heaven, above the stars, where angels cast their crowns before the Most High, the saints forever cry to God, O Lord, avenge Your own elect! for prayer is made in Heaven. The saints under the altar cry aloud, O Lord, how long? There is never a moment when the saints cease to pray. They have

*Vials full of odor sweet,   
And harps of sweeter sound.*

And we remember that the saints on earth are always in prayer. You meet together in the evening for prayer. You scatter to your houses and then your family fires begin to burn. And when your family fires are put out and your private devotions have ceased, the sun is just rising in the other land across the western sea and there they are beginning to pray again! And when the sun has set, then it rises somewhere round the world in the far east, there by the Ganges river, there by the Himalaya steepsand the saints of God begin again. And when the sun winds on its course and again shines somewhere else, then the saints of the Lord offer incense and a pure offering, so that there is never an hour when this world ceases to offer its incensenot one moment, even in the darkest shades of midnightwhen prayer does not ascend from this lower world! And it would be ill for the world if there were a moment when prayer should be suspended, for remember what a poet says, Perhaps the day when this world shall be consumed will be a day unbrightened by a prayer. Perhaps it may be so, but certainly such a day as that has not yet rolled over the world, for day without night the world is girdled with prayer and one sacred belt of supplication winds the whole globe!

Now, said Christ, if Gods elect in Heaven and on earth are day without night without ceasing, crying to God to give the Church her empire, her reign, her splendors, her victoriesrest assured the Church shall have what it asks for! Shall not God avenge His own elect that cry day and night unto Him? Yes, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, we may not live to see it, though sometimes I think there are some alive in this world who will live to see that bright day. And yet, if we live not to see it, the day shall come when Christ, who is the Truth, shall have all power given unto Him under Heaven even as He really has even nowHe shall then have it given to Him in the form and symbol and fashion of it also. The day is coming when Christ shall come in the clouds of Heaven to reign upon this earth in the midst of His people. Then, when He shall come, the kingdoms of this world shall be converted to Himall people shall flock to His colors! Every knee shall bow before Him and every tongue confess that the Lord is God!

I have sometimes thought that I may yet live to see that day, and perhaps some of you. We cannot tell when Christ shall come. We are very apt to forget that He comes as a thief in the night, in such an hour as we think not. It is a pleasing thought, sometimes, to remember that there may be some standing here that will not die, for we know the Scripture says, Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. When Christ shall come, we shall be alive and remain, perhaps, some of us, for He may come tomorrow, He may come tonight! Before the word I am speaking reaches your ears, the trumpet of the Resurrection and Jubilee may startle us all and we may behold Christ come in the clouds of Heaven! But whether He comes or not in our lifetime, there will be some alive when He shall come and they, if they are His people, shall not die they shall be changedthe dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we always be with the Lord.

O work on, minister! Toil on, teacher! Weep on, mourner! Pray on, intercessor! Hope on, Believer, the hallowed day is coming! Some of the streaks of the gray light already mark the horizon. Some of the sweet tidings of the Masters coming have already been announced to Gods favorite people! Some that have dwelt high on the mountaintop of communion have declared that the time is approaching. The chariot wheels of Christ are drawing near! But be it near, or be it far off, it must come. It shall come! The Church shall triumphthe world shall be subdued beneath her feet. God shall avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him. Now, I take that as the absolute meaning of the passage, the nearest and most appropriate way of explaining it.

II. And now I am going to try to work out THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TEXT. It is thisImportunity will prevail. Now you must not smile while I give you two picturesthe pictures that Christ gave His disciples, worked out a little, so as to be more plain to you. Jesus Christ says if you need anything of God, if you do not get it the first time, try again. And if you do not get it then, continue in prayer, for continuing long in prayer, you will prevail with God. And He gives you two pictures that we have had this evening.

The first is the good man who had no bread in his house when his friend came. You may picture the scene. He says, I am very glad to see you, but I have not a morsel of food in the house. If I had the richest dainties in the world, you could have them all but I have not any. Well, but, says his friend, I have come a good many miles this day. I cannot go to rest without something to eat. I shall faint. Well, but, he says, I have nothing for you. My dear Friend, says the other, cannot you obtain a morsel? I am famished by the wayI expected to have got to my resting place at noontide, and now it is midnight. I have been travelling these twelve hours and have had nothing at all to eat. Well, says his friend, I have something for your horse to eat, but I cannot give you anything. But at length he says, There is a friend of mine who lives down the street. I will go and get something from him. You shall not starve. I will not come away till I get something.

Away he goes and finds his friend asleep. He gives a loud knock. The man is upstairs in bed and he says, My wife and my children are with me in bed. He does not want to hear that knock and so he just sleeps on. Then there comes another tremendous knock. Says the man, I cannot think who that can be. The question is asked by those who are upstairs, but he does not feel at all inclined to get out and look. It is a cold night and why should he get up? Then there comes another rap. Well, he says, there is somebody at the door. He still turns in his bed and will not get up. He doesnt see why he should rise at such an untimely hour as that. Besides, it may be only some drunken fellow going home late. Then there comes another tremendous knock. He goes to the window, puts his head out and asks what is the matter. Oh, says the man, I need some loaves of bread. A friend of mine has come to see me and I have nothing for him. Why do you come to me for at such an hour as this? I cannot come down; my wife and my children are with me in bed; I cannot give you bread at this hour of the night. But, says the other, I must have it and I hope you will give it to me. What a friend you have been to me in times past! Friend or no friend, he says, I shall not give you anything at this time of night.

He will not rise and give to him just because he is his friend. Then what does the poor man do? He says, I will not go back. He thinks he sees that poor hungry man and he cannot bear the thought of going back and saying that he has nothing for him. That was the only house where he could get bread and so he knocks again. Oh, dear me, says the manI thought I had got rid of that fellow. I told him I couldnt get up at this hour and I wont! But then there comes another rapa tremendous one and a child says Father, we cant go to sleep! Hadnt you better go and give that man his bread? But the father says, No, I shall not! Why does he trouble me in this way? Then there comes another rap and he goes to the window in great anger and asks him, What do you want, coming here knocking in this way? I tell you once and for all, I shall not give you anything!

Well, says the man, you must give me bread. I cannot go till you do!

If you do not give me any, I mean to stay here and knock all night. Well, says Jesus, I tell you, though he will not arise and give it to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him what he needs. So he comes downstairs, gets the loaves, opens the door and says to the man, Here, take as many as you need, and be off with you, and never come to disturb me any more at night. So off he goesand importunity gets what even friendship could not obtain!

Well, then the Savior gives another picture. Importunity can get what even justice ought to get, but cannot. There is the poor widowshe is robbed of all she has. She had a little plot of ground and a little cottage with just enough to keep her children through the winter. And there was a little field, or two, that she could let out for sufficient rent to keep her all the yearbut now it is all pounced upon. She does not know what she is to do. Somebody will come in to claim it who has no right to it. She is turned out of house and homeand she and her poor children are on the streets! She goes off to the judges house to see hima rather wild errand, that, for when she gets there, there stand the porters at the door, and the men with long spears and they say, Woman, what do you want? I want to see the judge. You cannot see the judge. He has got plenty to do without seeing you. But I must see him! There is a man who has been taking I do not want to know anything at all about it! You cannot see him. But I must see him, says the woman and, somehow or other, though the porters repulse her all day long, she manages to get into court! And just when some witness steps down, up comes the woman and begins, My Lord. What case is this, Sergeant? asks the judge. Oh, it has nothing to do with the court business today, my Lord! Get down with you, says the judge to the woman. O my Lord, she replies, there is a man that has come and taken away Now, you have no right here, I tell you, you must go!

And she steps down, sad at heart. But the next morning she comes again. As soon as ever the court house is open, there is the woman at the door! Before anybody can be found to enter, there she is! She had established herself there as soon as the people came to get the place ready. Well, before they can begin the business of the day, the woman begins crying out, O my lord, my husband is dead. Did you not come here yesterday? asks the judge. Yes, my Lord. Well, I thought I told you this was not the proper time and place to apply. I cannot attend to you. O my Lord, if you would but just hear my case a little! Bring up the next case, says the judge, and there is a case brought up, and the judge proceeds. There happens, however, to be an interlude in the business, such as the poor widow has been looking for a long time. And his Honor is just going out of court for a little refreshment. And as he is leaving, the woman steps up and says, My Lord. Now take that woman away! She is always coming here and disturbing me.

The poor woman is taken away, but she returns, and all day long the poor soul is there. She comes the next day, and when the judge arrives, there is the apparition of this poor woman to startle him again. What is to be done all day long? He knows that at every possible opportunity she can get, she will be down upon him to ask him to avenge her of her adversary. At length he says, Well, what is your case? And as soon as it is stated, he thinks to himself, I know that man very well, that has taken away her property. He is a friend of mine. I shall not interfere in the case. I neither fear God, nor regard man, but as a friend of mine has got her property, I shall not interfere. And then, addressing the woman, I absolutely forbid you ever to come to this place again.

But she comes again, and again, and again, until one day she steps into the witness box, and says, My lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. Now I do not want any more of that! You are always giving me your long sermons in court. My lord, continues the woman, I will have a hearing today. I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have been here many times before and you have sent me away when I ought to have had justice at your hands. And now this day, unless I am dragged out of court by force, I will stop until I get justice! Well, the judge thinks to himself a moment or two and says, If I were just to decide this womans case, I would get rid of her. Well, come, my good Woman, let us hear about it. So she tells the whole history of the case. The judge sends the officer of the court to enquire into it and, at last he says, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her of her adversary. He accordingly sets all her accounts square and she goes home to her cottage with a joyous heartand her children are fed and all is happy, for the judge has set her free from all her dilemmas!

Now, Friends, there you have a case of importunity even going before the claims of justice, as in the other case it went before the claims of friendship.

Now what are these two pictures to teach the sinner? They are to teach the sinner that if the importunate woman could prevail with an unjust judge, you will prevail with a loving Savior! They are to teach you that if by constant knocking, the friend who at first would not rise, at last did rise and give bread, by your repeated prayers you shall at last find the salvation that you need! I am certain that somewhere within the compass of my voice, there is one who has been for weeks and months seeking the Savior, but he or she has never yet found Him. Satan has perhaps whispered, God will never have mercy on you. You may as well give up prayerprayer is a useless employment if it has no answer! Never attend the House of God againthere is no mercy for you. Never again come to the Throne of Grace, for Gods ears are deaf to youHe will not hear your supplication.

Now, poor Heart, listen not to the temptation of the devil, but listen to this that I have to say to you! Go again seven times and if that suffices not, 70 times seven! God has not promised to answer you the first time! He will answer you, however, at the end, so continue your prayers. When, with deep anxiety of spirit I sought the Savior, I prayed many months before I could get an answer. And I heard my mother say, one day, that there never was a man in the world, she believed, so wicked as to say that he had sought God truly and earnestly in prayer, and God had not answered him. Many black oaths, she said, have been sworn, but I never heard of any man who was allowed to utter a sentence so derogatory to the love and mercy of God as that, I have sought God and He would not save me. At once the thought struck me, I will say that, for I know I have sought God and I feel He has not heard me. I resolved that I would say it and that she should hear me, for I felt my spirit vexed within me. I had sought God and, I thought, with all my heart, and He had never vouchsafed to hear me. But then it occurred to me, Would it not be better to try again before saying it? That time I sought as I had not sought before and that time I found and rejoiced in hope of the Glory of God, because my supplication had been answered in my own heart, to my own souls comfort!

Now, if you are in the same position and are laboring under the same temptation, try again. If your knees have been bent 70 times in vain, remember you have 70 times the fewer to pray in vain, so try again! You are so much nearer the appointed number which you must reach before God will hear you! Do not give up your efforts. In fact, I know you neither will nor can give up if God, the Holy Spirit, has taught you praying, for that is one of the things that Satan cannot dohe cannot effectually stop a praying tongue! He cannot forever quench the desire of the soul, though he may for a time do it by despondency and despair, yet he cannot do it in the end. I want, before I have done, to take the hand of that young man, or that young woman who is tonight seeking the Savior, but, as yet, without having found Him to his hearts joy. And I want to say a kind word to him. Dear Brother, Sister, God will hear you! Be of good courage, but, in the meantime, to keep your spirits up, I will tell you a few things.

Consider what a great Being God is, and what a little creature you are, and then you need not wonder that you have to wait. Why poor people, when they go to see a rich man, will stay in his hall for hours! And if they are going to see a great lord, they will not mind waiting in the antechamber where there is no fire till their feet are cramped with cold, so long as they have a hope that they shall get an audience at last. The pertinacity of the beggar in the streets is sometimes astonishingyou cannot get rid of him! You walk a little faster and he walks a little faster, too! He keeps talking to you about his wife who is sick, and tells you that he is a poor man, that you will never miss what you give him, that God will bless you and all that. Well, if a beggar will wait upon his fellow worm, if we would be content to wait upon the great of the earth for so long a season, oh, we need not murmur against God if He bids us wait in His halls, for we are poor miserable sinners who are good for nothing and He is the eternal God! There is such a distance between Him and us that we need not murmur if He keeps us waiting.

Besides, let us recollect what a great blessing it is we are asking for. The beggar will stay at your door half an hour with the hope of getting, perhaps, a crust of bread. And men will go and wait in the halls of princes just to get a word. But ah, my Friends, that which we are seeking is more than that! We are seeking for the salvation of our souls! We are seeking for the blood of Christ, for the pardon of sin, for a seat in Paradise, for deliverance from the flames of Hell! And for such a gift as this it were worthwhile waiting a thousand years if we might be sure of getting it at last!

But again, poor Soul, be willing to wait because, let me tell you this, you are sure to get what you seek. Oh, cries one, I would not mind what I did if I thought I could be saved at last. Well, you will. There was never a soul that perished praying, never one who sought the Savior who was at last cast away! Oh, if the Lord should keep you waiting till your head is silvered over with gray, His mercy would not come too late! He would be sure at last to give an ear to your supplication and bestow upon you the blessing. Therefore be patient. Though the promise tarries, wait for it, for it will be sure to come. But while you are waiting, do not do as some people have done. I once had a hearer who used to tell me that he was waiting and I could never get him out of that idea, say what I would, until at last I had to use a good illustration in order to prove to him that he was not waiting.

Now, I said, suppose I came to your house one day to tea and you said to me, My dear Sir, how late you are! We have been waiting for you. And suppose there was no fire in the grate, no kettle singing on the hob, and no tea made? I would say, I do not believe you. Waiting implies being ready! If a man is waiting for another, he is ready for him. If you are waiting for the coach, why, you have your hat on and great coat and your gloves, and your bag is packed and you are ready to start. If you are waiting for the train, you are standing on the platform and looking for its arrival. And when a man is waiting for Christ, he is ready for Christ. But when they say they are waiting and they fold their arms in unconcern, it is a gross lie! They are waiting for God to destroy them, and nothing else!

When men do really wait for the Lord, this is the way they waitthey go where they hope to meet Him. If they hear that Jesus is in the House of God, they go there. If they hear that He is to be found in the reading of the Word, they read it day and night. If they hear that some minister has been especially blessed in the salvation of souls, they will go many miles to hear him in order that they may see Jesus. They will go where Jesus goes and when they get near Jesus, they will cry after Him. They will do as the blind man did when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth passed by! Let us describe that scene, for a moment. A poor man sat by the wayside one day. He could see nothing, but he heard a great noise and a lot of people coming his way, so he said to some of the crowd, What is that? And they replied, It is Jesus of Nazareth that passes by. That, he thinks, is a fine opportunity, and he cries out as loud as ever he can, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!

Jesus Christ is preaching to the crowd as He walks along, working miracles, and He takes no notice of the cry. Then there is another shout, You, Son of David, have mercy on me! The disciples come and tell him to be quiet, that he is disturbing Christ in His preaching and that he must not make so much noisebut so much the more, a great deal, he cries, You, Son of David, have mercy on me! And that shout prevailed over the voice of Christ and the tramping of the feet of the multitude! Then Christ stood still and looked at the blind man, opened his eyes and gave him sight! Now you must do the sameyou must cry to Christ, you must agonize in prayer and wrestle on your knees before Him when you think that you are near to Him. Above all, study His promises and read His Word. And if this suffices not, hear, then, the last advice and the bestgo to your chamber, tonight, you that have sought the Savior long and, as you think, sought Him in vaingo to your chamber, shut your door, fall on your knees, open His Holy Word, turn to that passage which describes the death of Jesus and when you have meekly and reverently read through the story of the Crucifixion, shut the Book, sit down and picture in your minds eye the hill of Calvarysee the Cross in the midst of those two other crosses of the thieves. Picture to yourselves the Lord Jesus with the crown of thorns on His head, with His hands all dropping blood, with His side distilling a purple torrent. Dont think of anything else!

The first thing that will happen, God the Holy Spirit helping you, will be that you will begin to weep. Tears will run down your cheeks at the sight of the dear bleeding Man and, after a while, faith will begin to kindle and the thought will arise, Many souls have been saved by trusting in Him that died upon the Crossand why not I? And it may be that you shall come down from that chamber of yours with a light heart and gladsome countenance, singing as you come down the stairs

*Oh, how sweet to view the flowing   
Of His sin-atoning blood!   
With Divine assurance knowing   
He has made my peace with God!*

There is no other way of getting peace like that. O you that have sought often, adopt this last resource! You can but perish coming to Jesus! You will perish if you do not come! But at His feet never a sinner died and never a sinner shall! Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. You sin-bitten, conscience-stricken sons of men, hear the GospelThis is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, that Christ died for sinners. Believe the Gospel and your soul shall live! You shall be saved and rejoice in everlasting Glory!

Christ died for real sinners. You ask a man, Do you take Gods name in vain? No. Do you honor other gods before the Lord Jehovah? No. Do you ever break the Sabbath? No. Do you always honor your father and mother? Yes, all these things have I kept from my youth up. Well then, Jesus Christ did not die for you at allyou are too good to go to Heaven! You are not the sort of person the Gospel is preached to! Jesus Christ says, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came to save him whose aching heart and bleeding spirit and tearful eyes betray the man who feels himself a sinner!

Now, may I write the word SINNER in great capital letters and ask, Who is the man that this word depicts? Suppose I were to do it? Are there not some of you who would get up and say from your hearts, O Sir, that is my name! You may put that on me, I the am chief of sinners. Well then, Jesus died for you! But, says one, if I had a few good works, I should then think He died for me. Then you would have no reason to think so! Your reason for believing that Christ died for you must be grounded on your sins. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinnersthat must be your only groundwork. It is hard, says one, to draw white from black. Yes, but though it is hard, that is what faith must do. You must infer the good from the seeming evil. You know Martin Luthers logic. He says, in his book on Galatians, that Satan once came to him and said, Martin, you are a great sinner. You will be damned. No, said he, Satan, the first is trueI am a great sinner. The second is not true, for, because I am a great sinner, (and I thank you for telling me of it), and because I feel it, I shall be saved, for Christ came to save sinners! And so I cut your head off with your own sword. The greatest saints on earth often have come to this. Oh, said the heir of Heaven, I am afraid I am no child of God. And the shortcut to comfort is this, Well, if I am not a child of God, I am a sinner and

*A sinner is a sacred thing,   
The Holy Spirit has made him so.*

And straightway he comes to Christ, and cries   
*Nothing in my hands I bring,   
Simply to Your Cross I cling!*

Poor Sinners, that is believing on Christ, believing that He died for you when there is no evidence that He did except your own sense of sin. Then, casting your black soul into the fountain, bringing your naked soul to the heavenly wardrobethen do you prove the power of faith and then are you thus manifested to be the children of God in verity and truth.

May the Lord add His blessing! If there are any careless souls here, may He awaken them, for Jesus Christs 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 #1963 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SEARCH FOR FAITH   
NO. 1963

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 15, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? Luke 18:8.**

IT is absolutely certain that God will hear the prayers of His people. From beneath the altar, souls cry unto Him day and night to vindicate the cause of Christ, the cause of truth and righteousnessand to cast down His adversarythese shall be answered speedily. Here on earth, scant though the supplication may be, yet there is a remnant according to the election of Grace who cease not to importune the Almighty God to make bare His arm and display the majesty of His Word. Though for wise and gracious purposes the answer to those prayers may be delayed, yet it is absolutely certain. Shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him though He keeps their case long in hand? Assuredly He will, for those prayers are inspired by the Spirit who knows the mind of God! They are for the Glory of God and of His Christ and they are presented by our great High Priest! Long-suffering keeps back the advent and the judgment for a while, for the Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But He will not forever delay the long-expected end! The Lord Jesus, Himself, gives us this personal assurance, I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. No doubt remains when Jesus says, I tell you. The Lord will come and, according to His own reckoning, He will come quickly. His reckoning is according to the chronology of Heaven and this, the heirs of Heaven ought gladly to acceptit is meet that even now we keep celestial time.

Brothers and Sisters, let not your hearts fail you as to the ultimate issue of the present conflict. The Lord shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah! He shall utterly abolish the idols. Antichrist shall be overthrown like a millstone cast into the sea, it shall fall and be no more. The heathen shall be our Lords inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth shall be His possession. He must reign until all enemies shall be put under His feet. If the present contest should be continued, century after century, be not weary! It is only long to your impatience. It is a short work to God! So grand a volume of the book as this, which contains the history of redemption, may well require a long time for its unrollingand to such poor readers as we are, the spelling of it out, word by word, may seem an endless task! But we shall yet come to its close and then we shall find that, like the Book of Psalms, it ends in hallelujahs.

The matter to be questioned is not what God will do, but what men will do. Faithfulness is established in the very heavensbut what of faithfulness upon the earth? The part that God allots to us is that we believe His Word, for so shall we be established. It is the childs part to trust his father; it is the disciples part to accept the teaching of his Master. Alas, how little there is of it at this moment! Knowing the feebleness of the faith of those around Him and foreseeing that future generations would partake of the same folly, the Savior gave utterance to this memorable question, When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? God is faithful, but are men faithful? God is true, but do we believe Him? This is the point and it is upon this that I shall speak this morning as the Holy Spirit shall help me.

I. I notice with regard to our text, first, that IT IS REMARKABLE IF WE CONSIDER THE PERSON MENTIONED AS SEARCHING FOR FAITH When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

When Jesus comes, He will look for precious faith . He has more regard for faith than for anything else that earth can yield Him! Our returning Lord will care nothing for the treasures of the rich or the honors of the great. He will not look for the abilities we have manifested, nor the influence we have acquiredHe will look for our faith! It is His Glory that He is believed on in the world and to that He will have respect. This is the jewel for which He is searching. This heavenly Merchant counts faith to be the pearl of great pricefaith is precious to Jesus as well as to us.

The Last Day will be occupied with a great scrutiny and that scrutiny will be made upon the essential pointwhere is there faith and where is there no faith? He that believes is saved. He that believes not is condemned. A search warrant will be issued for our houses and our hearts. And the enquiry will beWhere is your faith? Did you honor Christ by trusting His Word and His blood, or did you not? Did you glorify God by believing His Revelation and depending upon His promise, or did you not? The fact that our Lord at His coming will seek for faith should cause us to think very highly of faith. It is no mere act of the intellectit is a Grace of the Holy Spirit which brings glory to God and produces obedience in the heart. Jesus looks for it because He is the proper object of it and it is by means of it that His great end in His First Advent is carried out. Dear Hearers, conceive for a minute that our Savior is searching for faith right now. His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men. This is the gold He seeks after amid the quartz of our humanity. This is the objective of His royal questDo you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

When our Lord comes and looks for faith, He will do so in His most sympathetic Character. Our text asks not, When the Son of God comes, but, When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? It is peculiarly as the Son of Man that Jesus will sit as a Refiner to discover whether we have true faith or not. He, also, as the Son of Man, displayed faith in God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is mentioned as one of the points in which He is made like unto His brethren, that He said, I will put My trust in Him. The life of Jesus was a life of faithfaith which cried, My God, My God, even when He was forsaken! His was, on a grander scale than ours, the battle of faith in the great Father waged against all the rebellions influences which were in array against Him. He knows what fierce temptations men experience, for He has felt the same. He knows how want tries the faithful and what faith is needed to be able to say, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.

He knows how elevation tests the soul, for He once stood on the pinnacle of the Temple and heard the infernal whisper, Cast Yourself down: for He shall give His angels charge over You. He knows what faith means in contradistinction to a false confidence which misreads the promise and forgets the precept altogether. He will not err in judgment and accept brass for gold! He knows what it is to be tempted with the proffer of honor and gainAll these things will I give You, said the fiend, if You will fall down and worship me. He knows how faith puts all the glory of the world away with its one brave and prompt utterance, Get you hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.

Beloved, when Jesus comes as the Son of Man, He will recognize our weaknesses, He will remember our trials! He will know the struggle of our hearts and the sorrow which an honest faith has cost us. He is best qualified to put the true price upon tried faith, self-denying faith, longenduring faith. He will discern between the men who presume and the men who believethe men who dote upon vain delusions and those who follow the plain path of Gods own Word.

Further, I would have you note well that the Son of Man is the most likely Person to discover faith if it is to be found. Not a grain of faith exists in all the world except that which He has, Himself, created! If you have faith, my Brother, my Sister, the Lord has dealt with youthis is the mark of His hand upon you! By faith He has brought you out of your death in sin and the natural darkness of your mind. Your faith has saved you, for it is the candlestick which holds the candle by which the chamber of your heart is enlightened. Your God and Savior has put this faith in you! Now, if faith in every instance is our Lords gift, He knows to whom He has given it. If it is the work of God, He knows where He has produced it, for He never forsakes the work of His own hands. If that faith is only as a grain of mustard seed and if it is hidden away in the most obscure corner of the earth, yet the loving Jesus spies it out, for He has an intimate concern in it since He is its Author and Finisher! Our Lord is also the Sustainer of faith, for faith is never independent of Him upon whom it relies. The greatest Believer would not believe for another moment unless Grace were constantly given him to keep the flame of faith burning. Beloved Friend, if you have had any experience of the inner life at all, you know that He that first made you live must keep you alive, or else you will go back to your natural death! Since faith from day to day feeds at the table of Jesus, then He knows where it is! It is well for us that we have One looking for faith who, on account of His having created and sustained it, will be at no loss to discern it!

Besides, faith always looks to Christ. There is no faith in the world worth having, but what looks to Him and through Him to God for everything. On the other hand, Christ always looks to faiththere was never yet an eye of faith but what it met the eye of Christ! He delights in faith. It is His joy to be trusted. It is a great part of the reward of His death that the sons of men should come and shelter in Him. If faith looks to Christ and Christ looks to faith, He is sure to find it out when He comesand that makes the text so very strikingWhen the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

The Son of Man will give a wise and generous judgment in the matter . Some brethren judge so harshly that they would tread out the sparks of faith, but it is never so with our gracious Lord. He does not quench the smoking flax, nor despise the most trembling faith. The question becomes most emphatic when it is put thusthe tender and gentle Savior, who never judges too severely, when He comes, shall even He find faith on the earth? What a sad and humbling question it is! He who is no morose critic but a kind interpreter of character. He who makes great allowances for feebleness. He that carries the lambs of faith in His bosom and gently leads the weak oneswhen even He shall come to make a kindly search, will He be able to find faith on the earth? Unbelief is rampant, indeed, when He who is Omniscient can scarcely find a grain of faith amid the mass of doubt and denial! Ah me, that ever I should have to explain the question, When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

Once moreI want to put this question into a striking light by dwelling on the time of the scrutiny. When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? Look, Brothers and Sisters, the ages are accumulating proofs of the truth of Christianityand the search takes place when this process has reached its climax. Whatever may be said about the present torrent of doubt, which no doubt is exceedingly strong, yet the reason for doubt grows weaker and weaker every year. Every mound of earth in the East contributes a fresh testimony to the accuracy of the Word of God. Stones are crying out against the incredulity of skeptics! Moreover, all the experiences of all the saints, year after year, are swelling the stream of testimony to the faithfulness of God! You that are growing gray in His service know how every year confirms your confidence in the eternal verities of your God and Savior. I know not how long this dispensation of longsuffering will last, but certainly the longer it continues, the more wantonly wicked does unbelief become! The more God reveals Himself to man in ways of Providence, the more base is it on mans part to belie His solemn witness. But yet, my Brothers and Sisters, at the winding up of all things, when Revelation shall have received its utmost confirmationeven then faith will be such a rarity on the earth that it is a question if the Lord, Himself, will find it! You have, perhaps, a notion that faith will go on increasing in the worldthat the Church will grow purer and brighterand that there will be a wonderful degree of faith among men in the day of our Lords appearing. Our Savior does not tell us soinstead, He asks the question of our text about it! Even concerning the dawn of the golden age He asks, When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

I want you to notice the breadth of the region of search. He does not ask shall He find faith among philosophers. When had they any? He does not confine His scrutiny to an ordained ministry or a visible churchHe takes a much wider sweepShall He find faith on the earth? As if He would search from throne to cottage, among the learned and among the ignorant, among public men and obscure individuals and, after all, it would be a question whether among them allfrom the pole to the equator and again, from the equator to the other poleHe would find faith at all. Alas, poor Earth, to be so void of faith! Is there none in her vast continents, or on the lone islets of the sea? May it not be found in some of the countless ships upon the deep? What? Not upon the whole earth? Not with Jesus, Himself, to look for it?

I have tried to set forth the question as distinctly as I can, that it may have due effect upon your minds. It sounds through the chambers of my soul like the death of many a grand hope and pleasant imagination. Lord, what is man, that centuries of mercy can scarcely produce a single fruit of faith among a whole world of the sons of Adam? When thousands of summers and autumns have come and gone, shall there be no harvest of faith upon the earth except for a few ears of corn, thin and withered by the east wind?

II. Let us somewhat change the run of our thoughts. Having introduced the question as a remarkable one, we will next notice that IT IS EXCEEDINGLY INSTRUCTIVE IN CONNECTION WITH THE PARABLE OF WHICH IT IS PART. It is wrong to use the Bible as if it were a box full of separate links and not a chain of connected Truths of God. Some pick sentences out of it as a crow picks worms out of a plowed field! If you tear words from their connection, they may not express the mind of the Spirit at all. No book, whether written by God or man, will bear to be torn, limb from limb, without being horribly mutilated. Public speakers know the unfairness of this to themselves and Holy Scripture suffers even more. The connection settles the drift and directs us to the true meaninga meaning which may be very different from that which it seems to bear when torn from its surroundings. Let us carefully note that this passage occurs in connection with the parable of the importunate widow pleading with the unjust judge and, therefore, it is to be interpreted in connection with it.

Therefore it means, first of allWhen the Son of Man comes, will He find upon the earth the faith which prays importunately as this widow did? Now the meaning is dawning upon us! We have many upon the earth who pray, but where are those whose continual praying is sure to prevail? I thank God that the Prayer Meetings of this Church are well sustained by praying men and women, but where are the Jacob-like wrestlers? I am afraid it cannot be said of many churches that their Prayer Meetings are at all what they should be, for among many, the gathering for prayer is despised and men say, It is only a Prayer Meeting! As if that were not the very crown and queen of all the assemblies of the Church, with the sole exception of that for the breaking of bread! Brethren, I will not judge with severity, but where are those who offer effectual, fervent, much-prevailing prayer? I know that there are many here who do not neglect private and family devotion and who pray constantly for the prosperity of the Church of Jesus Christ and for the salvation of souls. But even to you I put the questionIf the Son of Man were now to come, how many would He find among us that pray with a distinct, vehement, irresistible importunity of faith?

In the olden days there was a John Knox whose prayers were more terrible to the adversary than whole armies because he pleaded in faithbut where shall we find a Knox at this hour? Every age of revival has had its men mighty in prayerwhere are ours? Where is the Elijah on the top of Carmel who will bring down the rain upon these parched fields? Where is the Church that will pray down a Pentecost? I will not decry my Brothers in the ministry, nor speak little of deacons and elders and other distinguished servants of my Lordbut still, my Brothers and Sisterstaking us all round, how few of us know what it is to pray the Heavenovercoming prayer which is necessary for this crisis! How few of us go again and againand again to God with tears, cries and heart-break pleading as for our own lives for the increase of Zion and the saving of the ungodly! If the Son of Man comes, will He find much of such praying faith among our own churches? Ah me, that I should have to ask such a questionbut I do ask ithanging my head in shame!

The importunate widow waited with strong resolve and never ceased through sullen doubt. If the judge had not yet heard her, she was sure he must hear her, for she had made up her mind that she would plead until he did! A waiting faith is rare. Men can believe for a time, but to hold out through the long darkness is another matter. Some soldiers are good at a rush, but they cannot form a square and stand fast hour after hour. When the Son of Man comes, will He find many who can believe in a delaying God and plead a long-dated promisewaiting, but never wearying? When we have a revival and everybody is crying, Hosanna! certain eager folk are sure to be in the front. But when the popular voice growls out its, Crucify Him! where are they? Where are even Peter, John and the rest of the disciples? Go, learn to plead on when no answer comes and to press on when repulsedthis is the test of faith.

It is so easy to be a Believer when everybody believes! But to be a Believer when nobody believes and to be, none the less, a firm Believer because nobody believes with youthis is the mark of the man valiant for the Truth of God and loyal to Jesus. Brothers and Sisters, is it, after all, a matter of counting heads? Can you not dare to be in the right with two or three? Can you not be like rocks which defy the raging waves? Can you not let the billows of popular misbelief wash over you, break and crash and break and crash in vain? If these things scare you, where is your faith? When the Son of Man comes, how many will He find on the earth whose faith stands not in men, but in the witness of God?

The widow staked her all upon the result of her pleading with the judge . She had not two strings to her bowshe had but one resort in her troublethe judge must hear her. She would lose her little property and her children would die of starvation if he did not hear her. He must hear her! About that she had no two opinions. What we need at the present moment is the man that believes God, believes the Gospel, believes Christ and does not care two pins about anything else! We need those who will stake reputation, hope and life, itself, upon the veracity of God and the certainty of the everlasting Gospel. To such, the Revelation of God is not one among many truthsit is the one and only saving Truth of God! Alas, we have, nowadays, to deal with foxes with holes to run to in case they are too closely hunted! Oh, to have done with all glory but glorying in the Cross! For my part, I am content to be a fool if the old Gospel is folly. What is more, I am content to be lost if faith in the atoning Sacrifice will not bring salvation! I am so sure about the whole matter, that if I were left alone in the world as the last Believer in the Doctrines of Grace, I would not think of abandoning them, nor even toning them down to win a convert. My all is staked on the veracity of God! Let God be true, but every man a liar.

When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth, such as He deserves at our hands? Do we believe in Jesus practically, in matterof-fact style? Is our faith fact and not fiction? If we have the truth of faith, have we the degree of faith which we might have? Just think of thisIf you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove. What does this mean? Brethren, are we not off the rails? Do we even know what faith means? I begin, sometimes, to question whether we believe at all. What signs follow our believing? When we think what wonders faith could have done. When we consider what marvels our Lord might have worked among us if it had not been for our unbeliefare we not humiliated? Have we ever cut ourselves clear of the hamper of self-trustfulness? Have we ever launched out into the deep in clear reliance upon the eternal God? Have we ever quit the visible for the invisible? Have we clung to the naked promise of God and rested upon the bare arm of Omnipotence which, in and of itself, is more than sufficient for the fulfillment of every promise? O Lord, where are we? Where shall we find an oasis of faith amid this wilderness of doubt? Where shall we find an Abraham? Is not the question an instructive one when set in connection with the parable which teaches us the power of importunate prayer?

III. In the next place, our text seems to me to be SUGGESTIVE IN VIEW OF ITS VERY FORM. It is put as a questionWhen the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? I think it warns us not to dogmatize about what the latter days will be. Jesus puts it as a question. Shall He find faith on the earth? If you say, No, my dear Friend, I shall be very much inclined to take the other side and warmly plead the affirmative. I remember how Elijah said that he, only, was left, and yet the Lord had reserved unto Himself 7,000 men that had not bowed the knee to Baal. Nations that know not Christ shall run to Him and the kings of Sheba and Sheba shall offer gifts. I venture to hope that when the Son of Man comes He will find faith on the earthbut if you vehemently assert that it will be so, I shall be driven to advance the negative side with much apprehension that it may prove true! When our Lord was here before, He found little enough of faith. And He has distinctly told us that when He shall come the second time, men will be as they were in the days of Noahthey did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark. I am inclined to take neither side. Let it remain a question, as our Lord has put it!

This question leads us to much holy fear as to the matter of faith . If our gracious Lord raises the question, the question ought to be raised. They say that some of us are old fogies because we are jealous for the Lord of Hosts. They say that we are nervous and fidgety and that our fears are the result of advancing age. Yes, at 53 I am supposed to be semi-imbecile with years! If I were of their way of thinking, I do not suppose that this would occur to them. We fall into a pessimismI think that is the word they useI do not know much about such terms. Surely the Savior was not nervous! None will dare to accuse Him of foolish anxiety! But yet He puts it, When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? As far as my observation goes, it is a question which might suggest itself to the most hopeful persons at this time, for many processes are in vigorous action with tend to destroy faith. The Scriptures are being criticized with a familiarity which shocks all reverence and their very foundation is being assailed by persons who call themselves Christians! A chilling criticism has taken the place of a warm, childlike, loving confidence.

As one has truly said, We have now a temple without a sanctuary. Mystery is discarded that reason may reign. Men have eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil till they think themselves gods! Revealed Truth of God is not now a doctrine to be believed, but a proposition to be discussed! The loving woman at Jesus feet is cast out to make room for the traitor kissing Christs cheek! Like Belshazzar, our men of modern thought are drinking out of the vessels of Jehovahs sanctuary in honor of their own deities! The idea of child-like faith is laughed at and he is regarded as the most honest man that can doubt the most and pour most contempt upon the authority of the Divine Word of God! If this continues, we may well ask, When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? In some places the greatest fountain of infidelity is the Christian pulpit! If this is the caseand I am sure it is sowhat must become of the churches and what must come to the outlying world? Will Jesus find faith in the earth when He comes?

In addition to many processes which are in action to exterminate faith, are there not influences which dwarf and stunt it? Where do you find great faith? Where is the preaching or the teaching that is done in full faith in what is preached and taught? It is no use dogging other peoplelet us come home to ourselves. My Brothers and Sisters, where is our own faith? It seemed almost a novelty in the Church when it was stated long ago that Mr. George Mueller walked by faith in regard to temporal things. To feed children by faith in God was looked upon as a pious freak! We have come to a pretty pass, have we not, when God is not to be trusted about common things? Abraham walked with God about daily life but, nowadays, if you meet with a man who walks with God as to his business, trusts God as to every item and detail of his domestic affairs, persons look at him with a degree of suspicious amazement! They think he has Grace in his heart, but they also suspect that he has a bee in his bonnet, or he would not act in that sort of way! Oh yes, we have a fancied faithbut when it comes to the stern realities of lifewhere is our faith?

My Brothers and Sisters, why are you so full of worldly care? Why are you so anxious, if you have faith in God? Why do you display, in worldly things, almost as much distrust as worldly men? Why this fear? This murmuring? This worry? O my Savior, if You were to come, we could not defend ourselves for our wretched mistrust, our foolish apprehension, our lack of loving reliance upon You! We do not trust You as You ought to be trusted! And if this is the case among those who are such great debtors to Your loving faithfulness, where will You find faith on earth? Where is that unstaggering faith which betakes itself to prevailing prayer and so rises above the petty miseries of the hour and the fears of a threatening future?

Do you not think that this, put in a question as it is, invites us to intense watchfulness over ourselves? Do you not think it should set us scrutinizing ourselves as our Lord will scrutinize us when He comes? You have been looking for a great many things in yourself, my Brothers and Sisterslet me entreat you to look to your faith. What if love grows cold! I am sorry for it but, after all, the frost must have begun in your faith. You are not so active as you used to be. That is to be greatly regretted, but the streams run low because the wellhead is not as full as it was known to beyour faith is failing. Oh that your soul were fed upon Divine realities! Oh that you had a vivid consciousness of the certainty of Gods Presence and power! When faith is strong, all the other Graces are vigorous. The branches flourish when the root sucks up abundant nutrimentand when faith is in a healthy state, all the rest of the spiritual man will also be vigorous. Brothers and Sisters, guard well your faith!

My fear is that when Christ comes, if He delays much longer, He will find many of us faint because of our long waiting and because of the disappointments which arise out of the slow spread of the Gospel. The nations continue in unbelief. O Lord, how long?! Because we have not accomplished all that we hoped to have done, we are apt to grow weary. Or perhaps when He comes, He will find us sleeping for sorrow, like the disciples in the garden when He came to them three times and found them very sleepy. We may get to feel so sad that the Gospel does not conquer all mankind that we may fall into a swoon of sadness, a torpor of despair and so be asleep when the Bridegroom comes! I fear, most of all, that when Jesus comes, He may find that the love of many has waxed cold because iniquity abounds. Warm-hearted saints keep each other warm, but cold is also contagious. When sin abounds, saints may be able to stand against it and yet it has a sad tendency to chill their faith. If the Master comes and finds us lukewarm, it will be a calamity, indeed! The question stirs a bitter anguish in my soul. I trust it also moves you.

It is a question. I cannot answer it, but I open wide the doors of my heart to let it enter and try me. It acts like a fan in the Lords hand to purge the floor. It sweeps away my self-confidence and leads me to watch and pray, that I enter not into the temptation of giving up my faith. I pray that we may stand fast when others slide, so that when the Lord comes, we may be found accepted of Him.   
IV. I will close with this remarkmy text is very IMPRESSIVE IN RESPECT TO PERSONAL DUTY. When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? Let faith have a home in our hearts even if it is denied a lodging everywhere else. If we do not trust our Lord and trust Him much more than we have ever done, we shall deserve His gravest displeasure. It will be a superfluity of naughtiness for us to doubt, for, to some of us, conversion was a clear, sharp and distinct fact. The change made in our characters was so manifest that the devil, himself, could not make us doubt it. We know that the misery we suffered under a sense of sin was no fiction and that the peace we received through faith in Jesus was no dream. Why do we doubt?

Since conversion, some of us have been led in a strange way and every step of it has shown us that the Lord is good and true and ought to be trusted without stint. We have been sorely sick, full of pain, anguish and depression of spirit yet we have been upheld, sustained and brought through! In great labors we have been strengthened. In great undertakings we have been supported. Some of you have been very poor, or your business has been declining and emergencies have been frequentand yet all these have proven the Truth of God. Do not these things make it the more incumbent upon you to trust Him? Others of you have suffered sad bereavements. You have lost, one after another, the props of your comfort. But when you have gone to God, He has heard your prayers and been better to you than father, husband, or friend! It is down in your diary in black and white that His mercy endures forever and you have said to yourself many times, I shall never doubt again after this.

Brothers and Sisters, it ought to be impossible for us to mistrustand natural to confide! And yet I fear it is not so. If after all this watering, we grow so little faith, we may not wonder that our Lord asked, When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

Some of us have been so familiar with dying bedswe have seen so many pass away in holy calm and even with transporting triumphthat for us to doubt is disrespect to the memories of the saints! For us to doubt would be treachery to the Lord who has favored ourselves, also, with visits of His love. We may doubt the dearest ones we have and that would be cruelbut we had better do that than cast any suspicion upon Him who has manifested Himself to us as He does not to the world! I speak not to you all, but I speak to those whom the Lord has specially favored, to whom He has revealed His secrets and made known His Covenant. For these to question His faithfulness is wickedness! What shall I say of His own elect, if they do not believe Him? If it were possible for you to quit your faith, you would crucify your Lord afresh! He must not be thus wounded in the house of His friends. Go, go where you will, O Unbelief, you shall not find willing lodgment in my heart! From my spirit you shall be banished as a detested traitor, for my Beloved is true and I will lean upon Him!

I think I hear you say, We are resolved upon it. We are called to have faith in our Lord, even if none else believe Him. Then look to it that you do not fail in these evil times. If you would keep your faith, settle it in your minds that the Holy Scriptures are inspired of the Holy Spirit and so are our Infallible rule of faith! If you give up that foundation, you cannot exhibit faith worthy of the name. It is as clear as the sun in the heavens that a childlike faith in God as He is revealed is not possible to the man who doubts the Revelation. You must accept the Revelation as Infallible or you cannot unquestioningly believe in the God therein revealed! If you once give up Inspiration, the foundations are removed and all building is laborious trifling. How are the promises the support of faith if they are questionable? God can only be known by His own light and if we cannot trust the Light of God, where are we?

Next, settle it in your soul as to the Holy Spirits dealings with yourself. He has renewed you in the spirit of your mind. At least I ask the questionHas He or has He not? You were converted by a Divine agency from your lost estate of sin and brought, by the same Divine agency, into newness of lifewere you or were you not? Unless you are quite certain about this, it is not possible for you to rise to any height of faith. You must know that God has come into contact with your soul, or else what have you to believe?

Next to that belief you must know your full pardon and sure justification through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ your Lord. Believe in the precious blood! Whatever else you doubt, believe in the merit of the great Sacrifice of Calvary. Rejoice in your own acceptance through the Sacrifice, seeing your whole faith rests therein! O Brothers and Sisters, our eternal hopes cannot be built on speculationwe need the Revelation of God! We cannot fight the battles of life with probabilitieswe need certainties for such a conflict! If God has not revealed fixed Truths, you may go and think and dreambut if He has given us a clear Revelation, let us believe it and cease to imagine and invent! O Sirs, if you must speculate, risk your silver and your gold, but I beseech you to lay aside all idea of speculating in reference to your souls! I need absolute certainties and unquestionable verities to bear me up when deaths cold flood is rising up to my loins! Divine Truths of God, as they are written in the Book and brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit, are sure standing ground for that faith which Jesus looks for. He looks for it in vain when men no longer accept His work as undoubted fact.

Again, if you would have strong faith, never relax your confidence in the efficacy of prayer. This is essential to my text, for the widow used no other weapon than prayer in her importunity with the judge. She would not have persevered as she did in her pleadings if she had not felt morally certain that in the long run she would prevail. Brothers and Sisters, believe that God hears your prayers and that He will answer them! As for me, I do not need any argument to prove the influence of prayer with God. I have tried it and do try it till it is no longer an experiment! The man that habitually eats bread knows that he is nourished by itthe man that habitually lives by prayer to God knows that God hears him! It would be absurd to offer him evidence for or against the statement. If a person were to argue with me that there was no sun in the heavens, I am afraid I should laugh outright.

If anyone said that he did not believe me to be alive, I do not know in what way I could prove it to him. Would it be lawful to kick him, by way of argument? When a man says, I do not believe in prayer, I answer, What if you do not? You are the only loser. That God answers prayer is a living certainty to me and I can say no more and no less. If you do not believe in prayer, assuredly the Lord will not find in you the faith of which our text speaks. If you regard it as a pious exercise which refreshes the devout but has no power whatever with Godwell then, if all are of your mind, the Son of Man will find no faith on the earth! Do not talk about believing you know nothing of the matter!

If you do believe, believe up to the hilt! Plunge into this sea of holy confidence in God and you shall find waters to swim in. He that believes what he believes shall see what he shall see. No man yet was ever found guilty of believing in God too much! Among the high intelligences of Heaven, no creature was ever censured for being too credulous when dealing with the Word of the Most High. Let us believe implicitly and explicitly. Let us believe without measure and without reserve. Let us hang our all upon the Truth of God. Let us also aspire to walk with God in the heavenlies and become the Kings Remembrancers. Let us seek Grace to become importunate pleaders of a sort that cannot be denied, since their faith overcomes Heaven by prayer.

Oh, that I might have in my Church many a prevailing Israel! Some here know what it is to be up early in the morning to besiege the Throne of Grace with all the power of believing prayer. How much I owe to these dear ones, eternity, alone, will declare! Oh, that we had many more intercessors who would bear sinners on their hearts day and night before the Lord and, like their Savior, would never rest till the Lord built up His Church! Alas, for the rarity of such conquering faith! I question whether there are not Christian people here who have never heard a certain text which I am about to quoteand I am sure there are others who will shudder when they hear itThus says the Lord, concerning the work of My hands, command you Me.

Surely that cannot be Scripture! cries one! But it is so. Turn to Isaiah 45:11 and read it both in the Authorized and the Revised Versions. Can a man command the Lord? YES! To believing men He puts Himself at their call! He bids them command His help and use it as they will. Oh that we could rise to this! Is there such faith among us? If there is not, may our Lord Jesus, by His Spirit, work it in us for His own Glory! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Luke 17:20-37; 18:1-8.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK149, 12, 691. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2395 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE BLESSINGS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP   
NO. 2395

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, JANUARY 13, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 3, 1887.

**Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the   
one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.   
Luke 18:10.**

THIS is called a parable, yet it is rather an incident, an anecdote, a statement of facts. You will observe that our Lord never used a fable. Fables may be employed to set forth that which is earth-born, but a parable, which is, in itself, true, is alone adapted to set forth spiritual Truths of God. I say this just now because I read, the other day, an assertion that the story of the rich man and Lazarus was only a fable, like that of Jotham. But the most of our Lords parables are not only parables, but literal factsand all of them might be facts. I would almost go the length of saying that all of them have been actual facts and in this case there is nothing parabolic at all. It is the statement of an incident which did literally occur, for truth is best illustrated by truth and, as Christ had nothing to teach but what was pure Truth, He illustrated it by Truth and never went into the realm of fiction, or invented a tale, or told a story which was not a fact, much less did He ever teach by a mere fable!

There were two men who went into the Temple to pray. They prayed in just the way that our Lord describes and they went away, the one justified, and the other without a blessing. I am not going into the full teaching of the parable on this occasion, but I want to make a few observations concerning public worship in the Lords House. Commencing to preach, again, on Thursday nights, after my season of rest, I thought that this sermon should be a sort of preface or introduction to our gatherings for prayer, praise, preaching and hearing the Word. God grant us a blessing in beginning, again, this holy employment. And may we be in health and strength and spiritual vigor, and be of some use to the people of God!

I. Commencing, then, I would say, first, that IT IS WELL TO WORSHIP GOD IN PUBLICTwo men went up into the Temple to pray.   
It is good to pray anywhere. He that does not pray in his closet is but a hypocrite when he pretends to pray in the Temple. But, though we pray in the closetthough we get into such a habit of prayer and are so full of the spirit of prayer that we can pray anywhereit is well to go and mingle with others and openly worship God who delights to be thus worshipped. It was written very early in the history of our race, Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord. It has been the custom of the godly to meet for worship in all times. The sheep of Christ are gregariousthis is their nature, they love to gather themselves into congregations, to feed in the same pastureand to enjoy, together, the Presence of their great Shepherd. It will always be so. The more pious and godly men are, alone, the more will they love associated worship. If it should ever happily come to pass that each feeble one among us should be as David, and every David should be as the angel of the Lord, yet even then we would find strength and help in our service for God by meeting together for united worship. The Apostolic command is, Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. Public worship is not everythingif there were no private worship, it would be nothing by itself. To go up to the Temple is not everything. The man who does not meet God outside the Temple will not meet God inside the Temple, he may rest assured of that.   
Yet, it is well, it is desirable that it should be said of us as it was said of the men mentioned in our text, Two men went up into the Temple to pray. For public worship is, first of all, an open avowal of our faith in God and of our belief in prayer. If we pray in private, nobody knows it. At least nobody should know it, for our Lords direction is very plain, You, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly. Our acts of personal devotion must be sacred to God and our own souls, but when we go up to the public assemblywhether it is but of two or three, or of many thousands, it matters notthere is, to that extent, an open declaration that we believe in God, that, let others do as they may, as for us, we worship Him, we believe in the reality and power and usefulness of prayer and, therefore, in the light of day, before all men, we gather ourselves together to pray! I thank God that there are, in this unbelieving London, so many thousands of assemblies of worshipping peoplea public testimony constantly borne to the fact that we do believe in God and that we do believe in prayer!   
Public worship is also, in the next place, a good way of securing unity in prayer. A number of persons may agree to pray about one thing, yet they may never see each others facestheir prayers may blend at the Mercy Seat, but they must lack an emphatic consciousness of unity such as we have who come together to pray. Our Lord Jesus promised His special Presence to the united gatherings of His people when He said. Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. Oh, dear Friends, what should we do if we were not able to come together to mingle our sighs and cries and tears and, better still, to blend our joys, our Psalms, our shouts of victory? As we are members of one mystical body, it is but right that we should, as members of that one body, worship together, lifting up the joyous song in tuneful harmony and blending our supplications!   
*Around our common Mercy Seat.*   
I think, also, that public worship is a great means of quickening. At any rate, it is so to me. I never feel that I can pray as well as when I am in the midst of my own dear friends and, oftentimes, when things are flagging within the soul, to get together with brighter spirits, in whom the life of God is more vigorous, is a great help to me. It does not seem so very long agoalthough these spectacles and my many gray hairs tell me that it must have been long since that I used to say to my mother that hymn which begins   
*Lord, how delightful tis to see   
A whole assembly worship Thee!   
At once they sing, at once they pray;   
They hear of Heaven, and learn the Way.* Dr. Watts put it very well and I can utter the same sentiment *Lord how delightful tis to see   
This vast assembly worship Thee!*   
when the house is full from floor to ceiling   
*At once they sing, at once they pray;   
They hear of Heaven, and learn the Way.* Those two men, of whom our Savior spoke, did well to go up to the Temple to pray! And we shall do well not to cease from the habit of assembling ourselves together for public worship in the Lords House.   
Then, dear Friends, public worship is a part of the great system by which God blesses the world. It has much to do with the gathering, the sustenance, the strengthening, the invigorating and the extension of the Church of Christ. And it is through the Church of Christ that God accomplishes His purposes in the world. Oh, the blessings that come to us in our public assemblies! Are there not, sometimes, days of Heaven upon earth? Have we not felt our hearts burning within us when we have been listening to the Word of God, or joining in praise or prayer? Those Houses of God where the Gospel is truly preached, whatever their architecture may be, are the beauty and the bulwarks of the land! God bless them! Wherever the Lords people are gathered together, in a cathedral or in a barnit does not matter whereit is none other than the House of God and the very gate of Heaven when God is there! And who among us would dare to stay away? As long as we have legs to carry us and health with which to use those legs, let us be found among the waiting assemblies in Gods sanctuary!  
For, once more, it seems to me that public worship on earth is a rehearsal for the service of Heaven. We shall sing together, there, Brothers and Sisters, not solos, but grand chorales and choruses! We shall take parts in the Divine oratorio of redemptionit will not be some one melodious voice, alone, that shall lift up the eternal hallelujah! I spoke playfully of our brother Mayers singing the Hallelujah Chorus all by himself, but neither he nor any other man can do that! We shall all have to take our parts to make the harmony complete. I may never be able to rise to certain notes unless my voice shall be wondrously changed, but some other sinner, saved by Grace, will run up the scalenobody knows how highand what a range of melody the music will have in Heaven!   
I believe that our poor scales and modes of singing, here, are nothing at all compared with what there will be in the upper regions! There, the bass shall be deeper and yet the notes shall be higher than those of earth. Even the crash of the loudest thunder shall be only like a whisper in comparison with the celestial music of the new song before the Throne of God! John spoke of it as the voice of many waters. The waves of one ocean can make a deafening, booming noise, but in Heaven there shall be, as it were, the sound of sea on sea, Atlantic upon Pacific, one piled upon another and all dashing and crashing with the everlasting hallelujahs from the gladsome hearts of the multitude that no man can number! I expect to be there and I remember that verse in one of our hymns that says   
*I would begin the music here,   
And so my soul should rise;   
Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear   
My passions to the skies!*   
But you cannot sing that heavenly anthem alone, because however well you can sing by yourself, that is not the way you will have to sing in Heaventhere you will have to sing in harmony with all the bloodwashed hosts. Therefore let us often come up to the Lords House, and when we are gathered together, let us again take up the words of Dr. Watts, and say   
*I have been there and still would go,   
Tis like a little Heaven below.*   
That little Heaven below shall help to prepare us for the great Heaven above!   
That is our first observation, then. It is well to worship God in public.   
II. Secondly, IT IS WELL TO HAVE A REASON WHEN WE GO UP TO PUBLIC WORSHIP. Two men went up into the Temple to pray. They went there for that express purpose.   
Now, whenever we go to the assembly of Gods people, we should have some good reasonand the right reason is that which these two men hadthey went up to the Temple to pray. I would rather that you came with a bad reason than that you did not come at all. I have known people come to pick pockets and yet they have gone away with a blessing. I am sorry if any of you came, tonight, for that reason, yet I am glad that you are here. Perhaps friends will prevent you from committing the sin of theft by taking a little extra care of their pockets! I have known persons go into the House of God out of sheer mockery and yet God has blessed them, for His ways are strangely sovereign. But that is to be ascribed to matchless mercy and it is not the way we ought to appear before the Lord!   
When we go to the sanctuary, we should go for a reason, we should go up to pray

we should not go merely from custom. Do we not often do that? Not so much on Thursday nights, I think, for people come, then, because they like to come. But on Sundays it is such a proper thing with certain persons to go to a place of worship that they almost wish it was not so proper and they would like to have a good excuse for staying home! Well, if you come only out of custom and you do not get a blessing, I pray you, do not wonder at it! If you do not come for anything and you do not get anything, do not be disappointed! If you go to a shop across the road and do not mean to buy anything, do not be surprised if you come out with nothingand if you come here and do not need anything, very well, you will go away with nothing! Is it not just what you might have expected? He who goes to the river and takes no rod or net with him, will have no fish in his basket, even though there may be shoals of them in the water! So, if we want to be blessed in our worship, we must come with a reason, even as these two men went up into the Temple to pray.  
Neither do I think that we should come up to the assembly of Gods people merely to hear sermons. The proper thing is to come to pray. But we do hear sermons, says one. Yes, but I hope that does not hinder your praying! Somebody said, the other day, that people who go to Church go to pray, but that we who go to Chapel go to hear sermons. My dear Friend, that remark shows what sort of sermons you get at Church, because those who come to hear us preach pray while we are preaching and they find that there is nothing that helps them to pray as much as a good sermon does! In fact, there is no worship of God that is better than the hearing of a sermon! I venture to say that if a sermon is well heard, it puts faith in exercise as you believe it, it puts love in exercise as you enjoy it, it puts gratitude in exercise as you think of all the blessings that God has given to you!   
If the sermon is what it should be, it stirs all the coals of fire in your spirit and makes them burn with a brighter flame and a more vehement heat. To imply that hearing a sermon is not worship is really to slander your minister! It must be a very bad sermon in which there is, as it were, a jerk out of the prayers to get into it, for the supplication should lead up to the sermon, and then the discourse should be a continuation of the prayer that has preceded it and bring it back upon the mind, again, so that all present may pray the better and worship God the more acceptably because of the sermon to which they have been listening.   
Still, if anybody comes to hear a sermon, especially as, perhaps, some of you came while I was away, to criticize the preacher, that is not the way to get a blessing! I do not mind if you criticize meyou may do that when you likeonly you will not get blessed by doing it. But when there are other preachers here and someone says that he does not like this one, and another says that he does not like the other, then, if you do not get a blessing out of the service, who is to blame? Two men went up into the Temple to pray. And if we go to the House of God and seek to turn the whole of the worship into a prayer, we shall not come away without a blessing! The main objective in all worship is that we get near to God and really pray to Him.   
Neither do I think that we should go to the House of God merely to get comforted and cheered. That is a very sweet result from hearing the Word of God, but it should not be our main objective in going to hear itwe should meet together that we may draw near to God. If it is the Lords will not to comfort but to rebuke us, and if it is His purpose not to cheer but to cast us down, we shall still feel, What I received came from God. I prayed to Him and He spoke to me and I had special fellowship with the living God, while I was also in communion with my Brothers and Sisters in Christ. That is what I went for, and that is what I have had.   
The publican teaches us what we should go to the House of God to do and to say. There should be, in Gods Presence, confession of sin. We should, each one of us, when we draw near to the Lord, bow down in His Presence with reverent awe. If the very angels veil their faces when they come near Him, we must humbly bow before Him when we come to worship in His House! He is in Heaven and we are upon earth. He is our Father, but He is also our Father who is in Heavenand we poor sinful creatures can never come into the light of His Presence without perceiving that we are full of sin. I have heard some people talk about walking in the light as God is in the light, as if that meant that they had no sin. Listen to what the Apostle John says, If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And then, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, is still needed, for even then it, cleanses us from all sin. Without its continual application, there would be no walking in the lightand the more walking in the Light of God there is, the clearer will be the perception of every speck and stain in the character! So, the more true our worship is, the more certain shall we be to make confession of sin.   
Communion with God and confession of sin should always be remembered by us when we come up to the House of God.   
Then there should be asking for mercy. We should come as paupers seeking relief. We should come as rebels craving pardon. We should come as pardoned ones still asking renewed tokens of forgivenessas men, once washed, who still come, that their feet may be cleansedthat they may be clean every whit as they pursue their course on the journey of life.   
In the publicans prayer there is, in the Greek, a reference to sacrifice. He cried, Lord, be propitious to me, the sinner. Have mercy upon me for the sake of the Great Propitiation, the Great Expiation. They who come up to Gods House for the right reason, come to find Jesus, to prove the power of His precious blood, to be perfumed with the incense of His all-sufficient merit and to be covered with His matchless righteousness! That is the right way of coming up to the assembly of Gods people, to speak with Him humbly, for we are sinful. Prayerfully, for we are full of need. Believingly, for Jesus has offered a Sacrifice and we are accepted in and through Him. That, dear Friends, is the second division of my discourseit is well to have a reason when we go up to public worship.  
I will pause, here, and pass a few questions round for everyone to ask, Did I come, tonight, for such a reason? Is that my general habit, to go up to my place of worship for such a reason? Or do I go jauntily, as if it were an ordinary transaction to go up for the worship of God? I will not propose any answers to youyour own consciences will be able to give the reply. Only let them speak and God bless the inquiry to you all!  
III. Thirdly, IT IS POSSIBLE TO GO UP TO PUBLIC WORSHIP WITH A GOOD REASON AND YET TO FORGET IT. Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.   
It was very remarkable that a Pharisee should forget his reasonthat is the one point concerning him to which I am going to call your attentionhe went up to the Temple to pray, but he did not pray. He never prayed a word, but he did something else. If it had been written, Two men went up into the Temple to boast, I would give the Pharisee the palm, for he certainly did that magnificently! But as it is said, Two men went up into the Temple to pray, then it is certain that this Pharisee quite forgot why he had come, for he never prayed at all!   
Well, now, who was the gentleman that forgot his reason? It was the person who ought especially to have remembered it, for he was a Pharisee! By profession he was a separatist from others because of his supposed peculiar holiness. He was a man amazingly acquainted with the Word of God, at least, with the letter of it. He wore some little black boxes between his eyes with texts of Scripture inscribed upon them and he wore others round his wrist. And he had very broad blue borders on his garments, for he was particularly observant of what he read in the Law of Moses. And, generally, a Pharisee was a teacher. He was first cousin to a Scribe and often was a Scribe, himself. He had written out a copy of the Law and he had its precepts at his fingertips!   
Now, surely, if there is anybody who goes up to the Temple to pray, this is the man who will pray. If anybody forgets why he came, it will not be this person! But, listen. That was the very man who did forget all about it and this may be true of a minister, a deacon, an elder, one of the Brothers and Sisters who prays at Prayer Meetings, the leader of a Bible class, a teacher in the Sunday school, the best sort of people. Oh, you exclaim, we cannot say anything but what is honorable of them! And yet it was one of this class who forgot why he went up into the Temple! Let me remind you Church members who make a loud profession, that it was a great professor who went up to the Temple to pray and did not do it! What would you say to your boy, who went to a shop, and then came home and said that he had forgotten his reason? And what will you say to yourself, dear Friend, especially if you happen to be somebody notable, if it should be you who went up to the Temple to pray, and did not pray? Oh, do not let it be so in your case! Do not, tonight, leave this house till you have had real fellowship with God, through JESUS CHRIST His Son, if you have never had it before!   
How do we know that this man forgot his reason? We know it by what he said. He did not pray at all. He said, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. By his words he must be judged, as you and I will beand his words go to prove that he forgot why he went up to the Temple. He acted as though he was in his own house, praising himself, instead of being in Gods House, where the Lord, alone, is to be praised!

Why did this man fall into this great blunder and forget why he went up to the Temple? He did it because he was so full of himself that there was no room for God in his heart. He was so satisfied with himself that he felt no need of prayer. He already had all that he required and he had so much that he could only stand still and overflow with a kind of gratitude to the one to whom he owed everything, namely, himself. Though he said, God, I thank You, He did not mean ithe meant all the praise for himself! He was so fine a bird and had such rich feathers that he felt that everybody ought to admire him as much as he admired himself!   
Well now, Brothers and Sisters, you will say to me, Has this any bearing upon us? Listen. Do you ever feel perfectly satisfied with yourselves? Are there not times when there is no sin that burns the conscience, when you think that you are somebody, a pattern saint, a highly experienced good old man, a rare Christian matron, and so on? The devil tells you all that, does he not? And you believe him! Or else you say that you are such a smart young manyou have only lately joined the Church, yet you have already got into the Lords work in a wonderful waythere must be a great deal in you. You do not put this boasting into English, because we do not talk English to our hearts when we get proudit is a sort of Greek which we talk, by which we try to conceal our own meaning from ourselves! Then we feel, perhaps, that we are getting perfectand that is the time when we forget to pray! And we go into the House of God and, when we come out, we make some remark about the preachers manner, or about Sister So-and-So, whose bonnet is really too smart for a Christian woman to wear, or about our friend, So-and-So, who spoke rather roughly to us. WeWE WEwe are so good that we can find fault with all others and say, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican! And then we do not pray.   
Whenever you get one inch above the ground in your own esteem, you are that inch too high! The way to Heaven is down, down, down! As to self, it must sink. Our sense of sin must grow deeper and deeper, and a sense of obligation to Grace must be more and more fully impressed upon our heart until we are able to say with great emphasis, though it is in the deep silence of the soul, God be merciful to me, the sinner! Otherwise, we shall come to the Temple on the reason of prayer and we shall forget it. We shall go to the closet to pray and yet shall not pray. Or we shall read the Bible and not find anything upon which to feed our souls because we are not hungry, but full. We shall not seek true wealth, because we shall fancy we are not poor, but rich. We shall not go to the Source of all might because we shall imagine we are not weak, but strong. If we go up to the Temple as the Pharisee did, there will be nothing for us, even in the place where prayer is known to be made.   
IV. So I close this discourse with a fourth observation. IT IS POSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT OUR REASON FOR GOING TO PUBLIC WORSHIP. We can go up to the Temple to pray and really pray!   
Who is the man who is most likely to pray? According to this parable, it was the publican. It was a man under a sense of sin. It was a man who felt that he was the sinner, even if nobody else was a sinner. It was this man to whom sin was a reality, not a fiction, and to whom the mercy of God was a real need, and not a mere doctrine, who craved that mercy at the Throne of God and felt that only Sovereign Grace could give it! It was this man who pleaded the precious blood of the Propitiation and felt that only by that way could he receive pardon. That was the man who truly prayed! Oh, have I not, sometimes, gone to pray with a breaking heart, groaning, crying and longing to see my Lords face, and to have a sense of acceptance in the Beloved? And I have come away and felt that I had not prayed because I could not use language and words such as I would wish to useand yet, on looking back, I have seen that it was then that I prayed most!   
Next to the sense of sin, the publican had a sense of need. When the need is felt the heaviest, prayer is truest. When the soul is lowest, then the flood of supplication is the highest. I am sure you pray best when you have least satisfaction with yourself, and you get nearest to God when you get farthest from self. When you feel that you are not worthy to lift up your eyes to Heaven, it is then that Heavens eyes look down on you! The sorrowful thought of a broken heart is immeasurably better than the indifference of a callous spirit. Bless God for a humble mind that trembles at His Wordit is much better than that presumption which puts aside all feeling. There are some who will go to Heaven questioning their own state all the way, yet they will arrive there safely. And there are some who never doubted their state who may have to doubt it when it is too late! Anyway, it is a deep sense of sin, a deep sense of need, a deep sense of dependence upon Sovereign Grace, that helps a man to come to the House of God and to go away with his mission accomplished.   
Let us all try to bring our needs before God. Let us sink ourselves in His Presence into the very depths, and then let us come and joyfully take what He freely offers to all who trust His dear Son! Let us receive Grace at His hands, not as courtiers who have a right, but as those who feel like dogs under the table and yet cry, Lord, even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the masters table.   
The publican excites our pity as we hear his groans and sighs, and see him smite upon his breast. But when we know that this is the man whom God blessed, and that he went to his house justified, rather than the other, we no longer pity him, but we seek to emulate his repentance and his Grace, and we pray the Lord to help us, thus, to come to His feast with a hearty appetite, thus to come to His wardrobe conscious of our own rags, thus to come to His fullness admitting our own emptiness, thus to come to the Fountain of Eternal Life feeling that apart from it we are dead! Then shall we truly pray, even as this despised publican did!   
Poor Soul, almost in despair, you think, I have no right to be here. I am so guilty, I am so vile. You are the very sort of sinner Christ died to save! Not sham sinners who have to pretend to be sinners, but you miserable sinners, you real sinners! Not you who make marks on your skin, like some beggars do, that you may seem to be wounded, but you who are as bad as you can beyou who have sinned so deeply that you feel as if you were already lost, you who lie at Hells dark door, you who are dragged about by the hair of your head by the foul fiend of the Pityou who are in your own esteem the worst of all men! Come to Christ tonight!   
Make way for them! Stand back, for these are the people He came to save! He has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Believe that Christ died to save you, and you are saved! Throw yourself on His atoning Sacrifice, and it avails for you at once! Glorify Him by trusting Him for your salvation! Let Him be your High Priest and, from first to last, your Savior, and He is yours as surely as you are a living man or woman! Go your way justified rather than the other who does not need the Propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord bless you! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 122; LUKE 18:1-14.**

We will read two portions of Scripture relating to public worship. The first will be Psalm 122, one of Davids Songs of degrees.   
Psalm 122:1. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the LORD. I was glad for my own sake, for I hungered and thirsted to go into the House of the Lord. I was glad for the sake of those who offered to go with me, for I delight to see in others a longing desire to profit by the means of Grace. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.   
2, 3. Our feet shall stand within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together. So is every true Church of God when it is in a healthy state. There are no divisions, no schisms Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together. It is not a long straggling street, a dislocated village, but all the houses are rightly and regularly placed and surrounded with strong munitions of defense against the adversary. May this Church always be blessed with such unity that it shall be as a city that is compact together!   
4. Where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. We should go up to the House of God, then, for two purposes. First, unto the testimony of Israel, that is, to hear what God testifies to us and, also, to publicly testify our confidence in Him. And, next, we should go up to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. Especially should we do this when we have been restored from beds of languishing sickness and pain, or when we come up from the house of mourning. But what is there in Gods House that should tempt us to go there?   
5. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. The preaching of the Gospel is like the setting up of a Throne of Judgment, for the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing, even, to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And long before the last Great Judgment Day arrives, and the final assize begins, the ministry of the Gospel is Gods Judgment Seat at which ungodly men may learn what they are in the sight of the Judge of Allwhat their present state of condemnation is and what it will finally be unless they repent!   
6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Ask that she may be free from persecution without, and from anything like disturbance withinPray for the peace of Jerusalem.   
6. They shall prosper that love You. Neglect of the means of Grace is the death of all soul-prosperity. But an earnest love of the House of God and all who belong to God will bring us true spiritual prosperity.

7-9. Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces. For my brethren and companions sakes, I will now say, Peace be within you. Because of the House of the LORD our God I will seek your good. Now let us read a short passage out of the Gospel according to Luke.   
Luke 18:1-7. And He spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says. And shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? He hears their prayer a long time because it does not weary Him. It pleases Him! He loves to hear their sighs and cries, but will He not yield to their entreaties? What do you think? Shall not the good, gracious, loving God yield, at length?   
8. I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? Faith enough to make such prayers as this? Faith enough to pray with importunity? Oh, if we had faith enough to resolve to have a blessing and determined never to cease crying to God until we had it, we should have far more favors than we have so far gained from our God!   
9-12. And He spoke this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. A fine peacock, truly! See how he spreads out his feathers and struts before God, glorifying himself?   
13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. The sinner, it should beit is emphatically so in the Greek. There is a Pharisee, the righteous man according to his own estimate, and all the rest were sinners. Here is the publican, he is the sinner, and he thinks everybody else is righteous. These were two very conspicuous individuals, the self-righteous man and the sinner! And they are both here tonight! I will not ask them to stand up, but no doubt they are both of them present. Now what became of them?   
14. I tell you, this manThe sinner   
14. Went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. It is Gods usual method to reverse what man does and to turn things the other way aroundEveryone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. You remember how the Virgin Mary, in her song, praised the Lord for this very habit of HisHe has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent away empty. That is His regular way of working and He will continue to do so!

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A SERMON FOR THE WORST MAN ON EARTH   
NO. 1949

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 20, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.   
Luke 18:13.**

IT was the fault of the Pharisee that though he went up into the Temple to pray, he did not pray. There is no prayer in all that he said. It is one excellence of the publican that he went up to the Temple to pray and he did praythere is nothing but prayer in all that he said. God be merciful to me a sinner is a pure, unadulterated prayer throughout! It was the fault of the Pharisee that when he went up to the Temple to pray, he forgot an essential part of prayer which is confession of sinhe spoke as if he had no sins to confess, but many virtues to parade. It was a chief excellence in the devotion of the publican that he did confess his sin, yes, that his utterance was full of confession of sin! From beginning to end it was an acknowledgment of his guilt and an appeal for Grace to the merciful God. The prayer of the publican is admirable for its fullness of meaning. An expositor calls it a holy telegramand certainly it is so compact and so condensed, so free from superfluous wordsthat it is worthy to be called by that name. I do not see how he could have expressed his meaning more fully or more briefly. In the original Greek the words are even fewer than in the English. Oh, that men would learn to pray with less of language and more of meaning! What great things are packed away in this short petition! God, mercy, sin, the propitiation and forgiveness!

He speaks of great matterstrifles are not thought of! He has nothing to do with fasting twice in the week, or the paying of tithes and such second-rate things. The matters he treats of are of a higher order. His trembling heart moves among sublimities which overcome him and he speaks in tones consistent therewith. He deals with the greatest things that ever can behe pleads for his life, his soul! Where could he find themes more weighty, more vital to his eternal interests? He is not playing at prayer, but pleading in awful earnest. His supplication speeded well with God and he speedily won his suit with Heaven. Mercy granted to him full justification! The prayer so pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, who heard it, that He condescended to become a portrait painter and took a sketch of the petitioner. I say the prayer in itself was so pleasing to the gracious Savior that He tells us how it was offeredStanding afar off, he would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast. Luke, who, according to tradition, was somewhat of an artist as well as a physician, takes great care to place this picture in the national portrait gallery of men saved by Sovereign Grace. Here we have the portrait of a man who called himself a sinner who may still be held up as a pattern to saints! I am glad to have the Divine sketch of this man, that I may see the bodily form of his devotion. I am more glad, still, to have his prayer, that we may look into the very soul of his pleading.

My hearts desire this morning is that many here may seek mercy of the Lord as this publican didand go down to their houses justified! I ask no man to use the same words. Let no man attach a superstitious value to them. Alas, this prayer has been used flippantly, foolishly and almost looked upon as a sort of charm! Some have saidWe may live as we like, for we have only to say, God be merciful to me, when we are dying, and all will be well. This is a wicked misuse of Gospel Truth! Yes, it turns it into a lie! If you choose thus to pervert the Grace of the Gospel to your own destruction, your blood must be on your own heads! You may not have space given you in which to breathe out even this brief sentence, or, if you have, the words may not come from your heart and so you may die in your sins. I pray you, do not thus presume upon the forbearance of God! But, if with the publicans heart, we can take the publicans attitude. If with the publicans spirit we can use the publicans words, then there will follow a gracious acceptance and we shall go home justified. If such is the case, there will be grand times today, for angels will rejoice over sinners reconciled to God and made to know in their own souls the boundless mercy of the Lord!

In preaching upon the text, I shall endeavor to bring out its innermost spirit. May we be taught of the Spirit so that we may learn four lessons from it!

I. The first is thisTHE FACT OF SINNERSHIP IS NO REASON FOR DESPAIR. You need, none of you, say, I am guilty and, therefore, I may not approach God. I am so greatly guilty that it would be too daring a thing for me to ask for mercy. Dismiss such thoughts at once! My text and a thousand other arguments forbid despair.

For, first, this man who was a sinner yet dared to approach the Lord. According to our version, he said, God be merciful to me a sinner, but a more accurate rendering is that which the Revised Version puts in the marginthe sinner. He meant to say that he was emphatically the sinner. The Pharisee yonder was the saint of his age, but this publican who stood afar off from the holy place was the sinner. If there was not another sinner in the world, he was oneand in a world of sinners he was a prominent offenderthe sinner of sinners! Emphatically he applies to himself the guilty name. He takes the chief place in condemnation and yet he cries, God be merciful to me the sinner.

Now if you know yourself to be a sinner, you may plead with God, but if you mourn that you are not only a sinner, but the sinner with the definite articlethe sinner above all othersyou may still hope in the mercy of the Lord. The worst, the most profane, the most horrible of sinners may venture, as this man did, to approach the God of mercy! I know that it looks like a daring action and, therefore, you must do it by faith. On any other footing but that of faith in the mercy of God, you who are a sinner may not dare to approach the Lord lest you be found guilty of presumption. But with your eyes on mercy, you may be bravely trustful. Believe in the great mercy of God and though your sins are abundant, you will find that the Lord will abundantly pardon! Though they blot your character, the Lord will blot them out! Though they are red like crimson, yet the precious blood of Jesus will make you whiter than snow!

This story of the Pharisee and the publican is intended as an encouraging example to you. If this man who was the sinner found forgiveness, so shall you, also, if you seek it in the same way. One sinner has speeded so wellwhy should not you? Come and try for yourself and see if the Lord does not prove in your case that His mercy endures forever.

Next, remember that you may not only find encouragement in looking at the sinner who sought his God, but in the God whom he sought. Sinner, there is great mercy in the heart of God. How often did that verse ring out as a chorus in the temple song

*For His mercy shall endure   
Ever faithful, ever sure!*

Mercy is a specially glorious attribute of Jehovah, the living God. He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious. He is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Do you not see how this should cheer you? Sinners are necessary if mercy is to be indulged! How can the Lord display His mercy except to the guilty? Goodness is for creatures, but mercy is for sinners! Towards unfallen creatures there may be love, but there cannot be mercy. Angels are not fit recipients of mercy. They do not require it, for they have not transgressed. Mercy comes into exercise after Law has been broken, not till then. Among the attributes, it is the last which found scope for itself. So to speak, it is the Benjamin and the darling attribute of GodHe delights in mercy. Only to a sinner can God be merciful. Do you hear this, you sinner? Be sure that you catch at it! If there is boundless mercy in the heart of God and it can only exercise itself towards the guilty, then you are the man to have it, for you are a guilty one! Come, then, and let His mercy wrap you about like a garment this day and cover all your shame. Does not Gods delight in mercy prove that sinnership is no reason for despair?

Moreover, the conception of salvation implies hope for sinners. That salvation which we preach to you every day is glad tidings for the guilty. Salvation by Grace implies that men are guilty. Salvation means not the reward of the righteous, but the cleansing of the unrighteous. Salvation is meant for the lost, the ruined, the undone! And the blessings which it brings of pardoning mercy and cleansing Grace must be intended for the guilty and polluted. The whole need not a physician. The physician has his eyes upon the sick. Alms are for the poor, bread is for the hungry, pardon is for the guilty. O you that are guilty, you are the men that Mercy seeks after! You were in Gods eyes when He sent His Son into the world to save sinners! From the very first inception of redemption to the completion of it, the eyes of the great God were set on the guiltynot on the deserving! The very name of Jesus tells us that He shall save His people from their sins.

Let me further say that inasmuch as that salvation of God is a great one, it must have been intended to meet great sins. O Sirs, would Christ have shed the blood of His heart for some trifling, venial sins which your tears could wash away? Do you think God would have given His dear Son to die as a mere superfluity? If sin had been a small matter, a little sacrifice would have sufficed. Do you think that the Divine Atonement was made only for small offenses? Did Jesus die for little sins and leave the great ones unatoned for? No, the Lord God measured the greatness of our sin and found it high as Heaven, deep as Hell and broad as the infinite and, therefore, He gave so great a Savior. He gave His only-begotten Son, an infinite Sacrifice, an immeasurable Atonement. With such throes and pangs of death as never can be fully described, the Lord Jesus poured out His soul in unknown sufferings that He might provide a great salvation for the greatest of sinners. See Jesus on the Cross and learn that all manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men! The fact of salvation and of a great salvation, ought to drive away the very notion of despair from every heart that hears of it! Salvation, that is for me, for I am lost! A great salvation, that is for me, for I am the greatest of sinners! Oh, hear my word this day! It is Gods Word of love and it rings out like a silver bell! O my beloved Hearers, I weep over you and yet I feel like singing all the time, for I am sent to proclaim salvation from the Lord for the very worst of you!

The Gospel is especially, definitely and distinctly addressed to sinners . Listen to itThis is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. The Gospel is like a letter directed in a clear and legible handand if you will read its direction, you will find that it runs thusTO THE SINNER. O Sinners, the word of this salvation is sent to you! If you are a sinner, you are the very man for whom the Gospel is intended and I do not mean, by this, a merely complimentary nominal sinner, but an out-and-out rebel, a transgressor against God and man! O Sinner, seize upon the Gospel with joyful eagerness and cry unto God for mercy at once!

*Twas for sinners that He suffered   
Agonies unspeakable!   
Can you doubt you are a sinner?   
If you canthen hope, farewell.   
But, believing what is written   
All are guiltydead in sin   
Looking to the Crucified One,   
Hope shall rise your soul within.*

If you will think of it again, there must be hope for sinners, for the great commands of the Gospel are most suitable to sinners. Hear, for instance, this Word of GodRepent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out (Acts 3:19). Who can repent but the guilty? Who can be converted but those who are on the wrong track and, therefore, need to be turned? The following text is evidently addressed to those who are good for nothingLet the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. The very word, repent, indicates that it is addressed to those who have sinnedlet it beckon you to mercy!

Then you are bid to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, salvation by faith must be for guilty men, for the way of life for the innocent is by perseverance in good works. The Law says, This do, and live. The Gospel talks of salvation by believing because it is the only way possible for those who have broken the Law and are condemned by it. Salvation is of faith that it might be by Grace. Believe and live! Believe and live! Believe and live! This is the jubilee note of the trumpet of Free Grace. Oh, that you would know the joyful sound and thus be blessed! Oh, that you that are sinful would hear the call as addressed to you in particular! You are up to your necks in the mire of sin, but a mighty hand is stretched out to deliver you. Repent and believe the Gospel!

If you need any other argumentand I hope you do notI would put it thusgreat sinners have been saved. All sorts of sinners are being saved today. What wonders some of us have seen! What wonders have been worked in this Tabernacle! A man was heard at a Prayer Meeting pleading in louder tones than usual. He was a sailor and his voice was pitched to the tune of the roaring billows. A lady whispered to her friend, Is that Captain F? Yes said the other, why do you ask? Because, said she, the last time I heard that voice, its swearing made my blood run cold! The mans oaths were terrible beyond measure. Can it be the same man? Someone observed, Go and ask him. The lady timidly said, Are you the same Captain F\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that I heard swearing in the street, outside my house? Well, he said, I am the same person, and yet, thank God, I am not the same! O Brothers and Sisters, such were some of us, but we are washed, we are sanctified! Wonders of Divine Grace belong to God!

I was reading the other day a story of an old shepherd who had never attended a place of worship, but when he had grown gray and was near to die, he was drawn by curiosity into the Methodist chapel, and all was new to him. Hard-hearted old fellow as he was, he was noticed to shed tears during the sermon. He had obtained a glimpse of hope. He saw that there was mercy even for him! He laid hold on eternal life at once! The surprise was great when he was seen at the chapel and greater still when, on the Monday night, he was seen at the Prayer Meetingyes, and heard at the Prayer Meeting, for he fell down on his knees and praised God that he had found mercy! Do you wonder that the Methodists shouted, Bless the Lord? Wherever Christ is preached, the most wicked of men and women are made to sit at the Saviors feet, clothed, and in their right minds. My Hearer, why should it not be so with you? At any rate, we have full proof of the fact that sinnership is no reason for despair.

II. I must now advance to my second observationA SENSE OF SINNERSHIP CONFERS NO RIGHT TO MERCY. You will wonder why I mention this self-evident truth, but I must mention it because of a common error which does great mischief. This man was very sensible of his sin insomuch that he called himself, THE SINNER, but he did not urge his sense of sin as any reason why he should find mercy. There is an ingenuity in the heart of man, nothing less than devilish, by which he will, if he can, turn the Gospel, itself, into a yoke of bondage. If we preach to sinners that they may come to Christ in all their anguish and misery, one criesI do not feel myself to be a sinner as I ought to feel it! I have not felt those convictions of which you speak and, therefore, I cannot come to Jesus! This is a horrible twist of our meaning! We never meant to insinuate that convictions and doubts and despondencies conferred upon men a claim to mercy, or were necessary preparations for Grace. I want you, therefore, to learn that a sense of sin gives no man a right to Divine Grace.

If a deep sense of sin entitled men to mercy,

it would be a turning of this parable upside down. Do you dream that this publican was, after all, a Pharisee differently dressed? Do you imagine that he really meant to plead, God be merciful to me because I am humble and lowly? Did he say in his heart, Lord, have mercy upon me because I am not a Pharisee and am deeply despondent on account of my evil ways? This would prove that he was, in his heart of hearts, a Pharisee! If you make a righteousness out of your feelings, you are just as much out of the true way as if you made a righteousness out of your works. Whether it is work or feeling, anything which is relied upon as a claim for Grace is an antichrist! You are no more to be saved because of your conscious miseries than because of your conscious merits! There is no virtue either in the one or in the other. If you make a Savior of convictions, you will be lost as surely as if you made a Savior out of ceremonies! The publican trusted in Divine Mercy and not in his own convictions. And you must do the same.

To imagine that an awful sense of sin constituted a claim upon mercy would be like giving a premium to great sin. Certain seekers think, I have never been a drunk, or a swearer, or unchaste, but I almost wish I had been, that I might feel myself to be the chief of sinners and so might come to Jesus. Do not wish anything so atrocious! There is no good in sin in any shape or fashion! Thank God if you have been kept from the grosser forms of vice. Do not imagine that repentance is easier when sin is grosserthe reverse is true. Do believe that there is no advantage in having been a horrible offender. You have sins enoughto be worse would not be better. If good works do not help you, certainly bad works do not! You that have been moral and excellent should cry for mercy and not be so silly as to dream that greater sins would help you to readier repentance! Come as you are and if your heart is hard, confess it as one of your greatest sins. A deeper sense of sin would not entitle you to the mercy of Godyou can have no title to mercy but that which mercy gives you. Could your tears flow forevercould your grief know no respiteyou would have no claim upon the Sovereign Grace of God, who will have mercy on whom He will have mercy.

Then, dear Friends, remember, if we begin to preach to sinners that they must have a certain sense of sin and a certain measure of conviction,

such teaching would turn the sinner away from God in Christ to himself . The man begins at once to say, Have I a broken heart? Do I feel the burden of sin? This is only another form of looking to self. Man must not look to himself to find reasons for Gods Grace. The remedy does not lie in the seat of the diseaseit lies in the Physicians hands. A sense of sin is not a claim, but a gift of that blessed Savior who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. Beware of any teaching which makes you look to yourself for help! You must, rather, cling to that doctrine which makes you look only to Christ! Whether you know it or not, you are a lost, ruined sinner, only fit to be cast into the flames of Hell forever. Confess this, but do not ask to be driven mad by a sense of it. Come to Jesus just as you are and do not wait for a preparation made out of your own miseries. Look to Jesus and to Him alone.

If we fall into the notion that a certain sense of sin has a claim upon God, we shall be putting salvation upon other grounds than that of faith and that would be false ground. Now, the ground of salvation isGod so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. A simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the way of salvation! But to say, I shall be saved because I am horribly convicted of sin and driven to desperation, is not to speak like the Gospel, but to rave out of the pride of an unbelieving heart. The Gospel is that you believe in Christ Jesus; that you get right out of yourself and depend alone on Him! Do you say, I feel so guilty? You are certainly guilty, whether you feel it or not! And you are far more guilty than you have any idea of. Come to Christ because you are guilty, not because you have been prepared to come by looking at your guilt! Trust nothing of your own, not even your sense of need. A man may have a sense of disease a long time before he will get healing out of it. The looking-glass of conviction reveals the spots on our face, but it cannot wash them away. You cannot fill your hands by putting them into your empty pocket and feeling how empty it is! It would be far wiser to hold them out and receive the gold which your friend so freely gives you. God be merciful to me a sinner is the right way to put it, but not, God be merciful to me because I sufficiently feel my sinnership, and most fittingly bewail it.

III. My third observation is thisTHE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR SINNERSHIP GUIDES MEN TO RIGHT ACTION. When a man has learned of the Holy Spirit that he is a sinner, then by a kind of instinct of the new life, he does the right thing in the right way. This publican had not often been to the Temple and had not learned the orthodox way of behaving. It is easy to learn how we all do it nowadays in our templestake off your hat, hold it in front of your face and read the makers name and address! Then sit down and, at the proper moment, bend forward and cover your eyes and, furthermore, stand up when the rest of the congregation does. People get to do this just as if they were wound up by machineryyet they do not pray when they are supposed to be praying, nor bow before the Lord when worship is being offered.

This publican is out of rank! He does not follow the rubric. He has gestures of his own. First, instead of coming forward, he stands afar off. He does not dare to come where that most respectable person, the Pharisee, is displaying himself, for he does not feel worthy. He leaves space between himself and God, an opening for a Mediator, room for an Advocate, place for an Intercessor to interpose between himself and the Throne of the Most High! Wise man, thus, to stand afar off! For by this means he could safely draw near in the Person of Jesus. Furthermore, he would not lift so much as his eyes to Heaven. It seems natural to lift up your hands in prayer, but he would not even lift his eyes. The uplifting of the eyes is very proper, is it not? But it was still more proper for the sinner not to lift his eyes. His downcast eyes meant much.

Our Lord does not say that he could not lift up his eyes, but he would not. He could look up, for he did in spirit look up as he cried, God be merciful to me. But he would not because it seemed indecorous for eyes like his to peer into the Heaven where dwells the holy God. Meanwhile, the penitent publican kept smiting upon his breast. The original does not say that he smote upon his breast once, but he smote and smote again! It was a continuous act. He seemed to sayOh, this wicked heart! He would smite it. Again and again he expressed his intense grief by this Oriental gesture, for he did not know how else to set forth his sorrow. His heart had sinned and he smote it! His eyes had led him astray and he made them look down to the earth. And as he, himself, had sinned by living far off from God, he banished himself far from the manifest Presence.

Every gesture and posture is significant and yet all came spontaneously. He had no book of directions how to behave himself in the House of God, but his sincerity guided him. If you want to know how to behave yourselves as penitents, be penitents. The best rubrics of worship are those which are written on broken hearts. I have heard of a minister who was said to cry in the wrong place in his sermonsand it was found afterwards that he had written in the margin of his manuscript, Weep here. His audience could not see the reason for his artificial moisture. It must have had a ludicrous effect. In religion everything artificial is ridiculous, or worse! But Grace in the heart is the best master of the ceremonies. He who prays aright with his heart will not much err with foot, hand, or head. If you would know how to approach God, confess yourself a sinner and so take your true place before the God of Truththrow yourself on Divine Mercy and thus place God in His true position as your Judge and Lord.

Observe that this man, even under the weight of conscious sin, was led aright, for he went straight away to God. A sense of sin without faith drives us from God, but a sense of sin with faith draws us immediately to God. He came to God alone. He felt that it would be of no avail to confess his fault to a mortal, or to look for absolution from a man. He did not resort to the priest of the Temple, but to the God of the Temple! He did not ask to speak to the good and learned man, the Pharisee, who stood on the same floor with him. His Enquiry Room was the secret of his own soul and he enquired of the Lord. He ran straight away to God, who alone was able to help. And when he opened his mouth, it was, God be merciful to me a sinner. That is what you have to do, my dear Hearer, if you would be savedyou must go distinctly and immediately to God in Christ Jesus. Forget all things else and say, with the returning prodigal, I will arise and go to my Father. None but God can help us out of our low estate! No mercy but the mercy of God can serve our turn and none can give us that mercy but the God of Mercy! Let every broken-down sinner come to his God, against whom he has offended.

The publican did not look round on his fellow worshippershe was too much absorbed in his own grief of heart. Especially is it noteworthy that he had no remarks to make upon the Pharisee. He did not denounce the pride, or the hypocrisy, or the hard-heartedness of the professor who so offensively looked down upon him. He did not return contempt for contempt, as we are all too apt to do. No, he dealt with the Lord alone in the deep sincerity of his own heartand it was well. My Hearer, when will you do the same? When will you cease to censure others and reserve your severity for yourself, your critical observations for your own conduct?

When he came to God, it was with a full confession of sinGod be merciful to me a sinner. His very eyes and hands joined with his lips in acknowledging his iniquities. His prayer was wet with the dews of repentance. He poured out his heart before God in the most free and artless mannerhis prayer came from the same fountain as that of the prodigal when he said, Father, I have sinned, and that of David when he cried, Against You, You only have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight. That is the best praying which comes from the lowliest heart.

Then he appealed to mercy only. This was wise. See how rightly he was guided. What had he to do with justice, since it could only condemn and destroy him? Like a naked sword, it threatens to sheathe itself in my hearthow can I appeal to justice? Neither power nor wisdom, nor any other quality of the great God could be resorted toonly Mercy stretched out her wing. The prayer, God be merciful, is the only prayer that you who have been greatly guilty can pray. If all your lives you have spurned your Savior, all you can now do is to cast yourselves upon the mercy of God.

The original Greek permits us to see that this man had an eye to the Propitiation. I do not say that he fully understood the doctrine of Atonement, but still, his prayer was, God be propitiated to me, the sinner. He had seen the morning and the evening lamb and he had heard of the sinoffering. And though he might not have known all about atonement, expiation and substitution, yet as far as he did know, his eyes were turned that way. O God, be propitiated, accept a sacrifice and pardon me! If you know your sin, you will be wise to plead the Propitiation which God has set forth for human sin. May the Spirit of God constrain you to trust in Jesus now! The new year is already gliding awayits second month is slipping from under ushow many months are to go before you, a guilty sinner, will come and ask mercy of God, the infinitely-gracious One? Great God, let this day be the day of Your power!

IV. I now close with my last head, which is thisTHE BELIEVING CONFESSION OF SINNERSHIP IS THE WAY OF PEACE. God be merciful to me a sinner, was the prayer, but what was the answer? Listen to thisThis man went down to his house justified rather than the other!

In a few sentences let me sketch this mans progress. He came to God only as a sinner, nakedly as a sinner. Observe, he did not say, God be merciful to me a penitent sinner. He was a penitent sinner but he did not plead his penitence. And if you are ever so penitent and convicted of sin, do not mention it as an argument lest you be accused of selfrighteousness. Come as you are, as a sinner and as nothing else! Exhibit your wounds. Bring your spiritual poverty before God and not your supposed wealth. If you have a single penny of your own, get rid of it. Perfect poverty, alone, will discharge you from your bankruptcy. If you have a moldy crust in the cupboard of self-righteousness, no bread from Heaven will be yours. You must be nothing and nobody if God is to be your All in All! This man does not cry, God be merciful to me the penitent, but, be merciful to me the sinner. He does not even say, God be merciful to me the reformed sinner. I have no doubt he did reform and give up his evil ways, but he does not plead that reformation.

Reformation will not take away your sinnership, therefore do not speak as if it could do so. What you are to be will make no atonement for what you have been! Come, therefore, simply as a sinner, not as a changed and improved sinner. Do not come because you are washed, but to be washed! The publican does not say, God be merciful to me a praying sinner. He was praying, but he does not mention it as a plea, for he thought very little of his own prayers. Do not plead your prayersyou might as well plead your sins! God knows that your prayers have sin in them. Why, Man, your very tears of repentance need washing! When your supplications are most sincere, what are they but the wailings of a condemned creature who cannot give a single reason why he should not be executed? Feel and acknowledge that you deserve condemnationand come to God as a sinner. Off with your paltry finery, I mean your filthy rags! Do not trick yourself out in the weeds of your own repentance, much less in the fig leaves of your own resolutionsbut come to God in Christ Jesus in all the nakedness of your sinand everlasting mercy will cover both you and your sins.

Next, notice that this man did nothing but appeal to mercy. He said, God be merciful to me. He did not attempt to excuse himself and say, Lord, I could not help it. Lord, I was not worse than other publicans. Lord, I was a public servant and only did what every other tax collector did. No, no! He is too honest to forge excuses. He is a sinner and he admits it. If the Lord should condemn him out of his own mouth and send him to Hell, he cannot help ithis sin is too evident to be denied. He lays his head on the block and humbly pleads, God be merciful to me a sinner. Neither does this publican offer any promises of future amendment as a setoff. He does not say, Lord, be merciful for the past, and I will be better in the future. Nothing of the sort! Be merciful to me the sinner is his one and only request.

So would I have you cry, O God, be merciful to me! Although I am even now condemned and deserved to be hopelessly damned by Your justice, yet have mercy upon me, have mercy on me now. That is the way to pray and if you pray in that way God will hear you. He does not offer to pay anything. He does not propose any form of self-paid ransom. He does not present to God his tears, his abstinence, his self-denial, his generosity to the Church, his liberality to the poor, or anything elsehe simply begs the Lord to be propitiated and to be merciful to him because of the great Sacrifice. Oh, that all of you would at once pray in this fashion!

Now, I want to cheer your hearts by noticing that this man, through this prayer and through this confession of sin, experienced a remarkable degree of acceptance. He had come up to the Temple condemnedhe went down to his house justified. A complete change, a sudden change, a happy change was worked upon him! Heavy heart and downcast eyes were exchanged for glad heart and hopeful outlook. He came trembling into that Templehe left it rejoicing! I am sure his wife noticed the difference. What had come over him? The children began to observe it, also. Poor father used to sit alone and heave many a sigh, but all of a sudden he is so happy! He even sings Psalms of David out of the latter end of the book! The change was very marked. Before dinner he says, Children, we must give God thanks before we eat this meal. They gather round and wonder at dear fathers happy face as he blesses the God of Israel!

He says to his friends, Brethren, I am comforted. God has had mercy upon me. I went to the Temple guilty, but I have returned justified. My sins are all forgiven me. God has accepted a Propitiation on my behalf! What good would come of such a happy testimony! This was a very sudden change, was it not? It was worked in a moment. The process of spiritual quickening is not a matter of hours, but of a single second of time. The processes which lead up to it and spring out of it are long, but the actual reception of life must be instantaneous. Not in every case would you be able to put your finger upon that second of time, but the passage from death unto life must be instantaneous. There must be a moment in which the man is dead and another moment in which he is alive. I grant you, life would be very feeble at firststill, there must be a time in which it was not there at all! And again, there must have been an instant in which it begins. There can be no middle condition between dead and alive. Yet a man may not know when the change took place.

If you were going to the Cape you might cross the equator at dead of night and know nothing about it, but still you would cross it. Some poor landsmen have thought that they would see a blue line right across the waves. But it is not perceptible, although it is truly therethe equator is quite as real as if we could see a golden belt around the globe. Dear Friends, I want you to cross the line this morning! Oh, that you might go out of this house saying, Glory, glory, hallelujah! God has had mercy upon me! Though you feel this morning that you would not give twopence for your life, yet if you come to God through Jesus Christ, you shall go away blessing God not only that you are alive, but that you shall live forever, happy in His love!

Once more, this man went away with a witness such as I pray we all may have. He was justified. But, you add, how do I know he was justified? Listen to these words. Our blessed Lord says, I tell you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. I tell you. Jesus, our Lord, can tell! Into our ear He tells it. He tells it to God and the holy angels and He tells it to the man, himself! The man who has cried from his heart, God be merciful to me a sinner is a justified man! When he stood and confessed his sin and cast himself wholly upon the Divine Mercy, that man was unburdened so that he went down to his house justified! We are all going down to our houses. Oh, that we might go down justified! You are going home. I want you to go home to God, who is the true home of the soul. He went down to his house justified, and why should not you do the same?

Perhaps, my Hearer, you have never been to the Tabernacle before. Possibly, my Friend, you are one of those gentlemen who spend Sunday mornings in their shirtsleeves at home reading the weekly paper. You have come here this morning quite by accident. Blessed be God! I hope you will go home justified! The Lord grant it! Perhaps you always come here and have occupied a seat ever since the Tabernacle was builtand yet you have never found mercy. Oh, that you might find mercy this morning! Let us seek this blessing. Come with me to Jesus. I will lead the way! I pray you say with me this morningGod be merciful to me

the sinner. Rest on the great Propitiationtrust in Jesus Christs atoning blood! Cast yourself upon the Saviors love and you shall go down to your house justified!

Is it a poor cottage? Is it less than thata back room up three flights of stairs? Are you very, very poor and have you been out of work for a long time? Never mind. God knows all. Seek His face. It will be a happy Sunday for you, if you, this day, begin a new life by faith in Jesus! You shall have joy, peace and happiness if you seek and find mercy from the great Father. I think I see you trudging home, having left your load behind you, but compassed about with songs of praise unto our God. So be it! Amen and Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONPsalm 51 and 32.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK912, 202, 591.  
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CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION   
NO. 216

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 3, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**And the Publican, standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. Luke 18:13.**

THE heroes of our Saviors stories are most of them selected to illustrate traits of character entirely dissimilar to their general reputation. What would you think of a moral writer of our own day, should he endeavor in a work of fiction, to set before us the gentle virtue of benevolence by the example of a Sepoy? And yet Jesus Christ has given us one of the finest examples of charity in the case of a Samaritan. To the Jews, a Samaritan was as proverbial for his bitter animosity against their nation as the Sepoy is among us for his treacherous cruelty and as much an object of contempt and hatred. But Jesus Christ, nevertheless, chose His hero from the Samaritans, that there should be nothing added to adorn him, but that all the adorning might be given to the grace of charity.

Thus, too, in the present instance, our Savior, being desirous of setting before us the necessity of humiliation in prayer has not selected some distinguished saint who was famed for his humility, but He has chosen a tax-gatherer, probably one of the most extortionate of his class, for the Pharisee seems to hint as much. And I doubt not he cast his eye sideways at this Publican, when he observed, with self-gratulation, God, I thank You, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. Still, our Lord, in order that we might see that there was nothing to predispose in the personbut that the acceptance of the prayer might stand outset even in a brighter light by the black foil of the Publicans character, has selected this man to be the pattern and model of one who should offer an acceptable prayer unto God. Note that and you will not be surprised to find the same characteristic exhibited very frequently in the parables of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As for this Publican, we know but little of his previous career, but we may, without periling any serious error, conjecture somewhat near the truth. He may have been, and doubtless he was, a Jew, piously brought up and religiously trained. But, perhaps, like Levi, he ran away from his parents and finding no other trade exactly suited to his vicious taste, he became one of that corrupt class who collected the Roman taxes. And ashamed to be known as Levi any longer, he changed his name to Matthew, lest anyone should recognize in the degraded cast of the Publican, the man whose parents feared God and bowed their knees before Jehovah. It may be that this Publican had in his youth forsaken the ways of his fathers and given himself up to lasciviousness and then found this unworthy occupation to be most accordant with his vicious spirit.

We cannot tell how often he had ground the faces of the poor, or how many curses had been spilled upon his head when he had broken into the heritage of the widow and had robbed the friendless, unprotected orphan. The Roman government gave a Publican far greater power than he ought to possess and he was never slow to use the advantage for his own enrichment. Probably half of all he had was a robbery, if not more, for Zaccheus seems to hint as much in his own instance, when he says Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor and if I have gotten anything of any man by false accusation, I restore it unto him four-fold.

It was not often that this Publican troubled the temple. The priests very seldom saw him coming with a sacrifice. It would have been an abomination and he did not bring it. But so it happened that the Spirit of the Lord met with the Publicanand made him think upon his ways and their peculiar blackness. He was full of trouble, but he kept it to himself, pent up in his own bosom. He could scarcely rest at night nor go about his business by day, for day and night the hand of God was heavy upon him. At last, unable to endure his misery any longer, he thought of that House of God at Zion and of the sacrifice that was daily offered there.

To whom, or where should I go, said he, but to God?and where can I hope to find mercy but where the sacrifice is offered. No sooner said than done. He went. His unaccustomed feet beat their steps to the sanctuary, but he is ashamed to enter. Yonder Pharisee, holy man as he appeared to be, goes up unblushingly to the court of the Israelites. He goes as near as he dare to the very precincts, within which the priesthood alone might stand. And he prays with boastful language. But as for the Publican, he chooses out for himself some secluded corner where he shall neither be seen nor heard and now he is about to pray, not with uplifted hands as yonder Pharisee, not with eyes turned up to Heaven with a sanctimonious gaze of hypocrisybut fixing his eyes upon the ground, the hot tears streaming from them, not daring to lift them up to Heaven. At last his stifled feelings find utterance. Yet that utterance was a groan, a short prayer that must all be comprehended in the compass of a sighGod be merciful to me a sinner.

It is done. He is heard. The angel of mercy registers his pardon, his conscience is at peace. He goes down to his house a happy man, justified rather than the Pharisee and rejoicing in the justification that the Lord had given to him. Well then, my business this morning is to invite, to urge, to beseech you to do what the Publican did, that you may receive what he obtained. There are two particulars upon which I shall endeavor to speak solemnly and earnestlythe first is confession, the second is absolution.

I. Brethren, let us imitate the Publican, first of all in His CONFESSION. There has been a great deal of public excitement during the last few weeks and months about the confessional. As for that matter, it is perhaps a mercy that the outward and visible sign of Popery in the Church of England has discovered to its sincere friends the inward and spiritual evil which had long been lurking there. We need not imagine that the confessional, or priestcraft, of which it is merely an offshoot, in the Church of England is any novelty. It has long been therethose of us who are outside her borders have long observed and mourned over it.

But now we congratulate ourselves on the prospect that the Church of England herself will be compelled to discover her own evils. And we hope that God may give her grace and strength to cut the cancer out of her own breast before she shall cease to be a Protestant Church and God shall cast her away as an abhorred thing. This morning, however, I have nothing to do with the confessional. Silly women may go on confessing as long as they like and foolish husbands may trust their wives, if they please, to such men as those. Let those that are fools show it. Let those that have no sense do as they please about it. But as for myself, I should take the greatest care that neither I nor mine have anything to do with such things. Leaving that, however, we come to personal matters, endeavoring to learn, even from the errors of others, how to act rightly ourselves.

Note the Publicans confession to whom was it presented? God be merciful to me a sinner. Did the Publican ever think about going to the priest to ask for mercy and confessing his sins? The thought may have crossed his mind, but his sin was too great a weight upon his conscience to be relieved in any such way, so he very soon dismissed the idea. No, says he, I feel that my sin is of such a character that none but God can take it away. And even if it were right for me to go and make the confession to my fellow creature, yet I should think it must be utterly unavailing in my case, for my disease is of such a nature that none but an Almighty Physician could ever remove it. So he directs his confession and his prayer to one place, and to one, aloneGod be merciful to me a sinner. And you will note in this confession to God, that it was secret. All that you can hear of his confession is just that one worda sinner.

Do you suppose that was all he confessed? No, Beloved, I believe that long before this, the Publican had made a confession of all his sins privately, upon his knees in his own house before God. But now, in Gods House, all he has to say for man to hear, isI am a sinner. And I counsel you, if ever you make a confession before man, let it be a general one but never a particular one. You ought to confess often to your fellow creatures that you have been a sinner, but to tell to any man in what respect you have been a sinner is but to sin over again and to help your fellow creature to transgress. How filthy must be the soul of that priest who

makes his ear a common sewer for the filth of other mens hearts! I cannot imagine even the devil to be more depraved than the man who spends his time in sitting with his ear against the lips of men and women, who, if they do truly confess, must make him adept in every vice and school him in iniquities that he otherwise never could have known. Oh, I charge younever pollute your fellow creaturekeep your sin to yourself and to your God.

He cannot be polluted by your iniquity. Make a plain and full confession of it before Him. But to your fellow creature, add nothing to the general confessionI am a sinner!

This confession which he made before God was spontaneous. There was no question put to this man as to whether he were a sinner or not. As to whether he had broken the Seventh Commandment, or the eighth, or the ninth, or the tenth. No, his heart was full of penitence and it melted out in this breathingGod be merciful to me a sinner. They tell us that some people never can make a full confession, except a priest helps them by questions. My dear Friends, the very excellence of penitence is lost and its spell broken if there is a question asked. The confession is not true and real unless it is spontaneous. The man cannot have felt the weight of sin who wants somebody to tell him what his sins are! Can you imagine any man with a burden on his back, who, before he groaned under it, wanted to be told that he had got one there? Surely not. The man groans under it and he does not want to be toldThere it is on your backhe knows it is there. And if, by the questioning of a priest, a full and thorough confession could be drawn from any man or woman, it would be totally uselesstotally vain before Godbecause it is not spontaneous.

We must confess our sins because we cannot help confessing them. It must come out because we cannot keep it inlike fire in the bonesit seems as if it would melt our very spirit unless we gave vent to the groaning of our confession before the Throne of God. See this Publicanyou cannot hear the abject full confession that he makes. All that you can hear is his simple acknowledgment that he is a sinner. But that comes spontaneously from his lips. God Himself has not to ask him the question but he comes before the Throne and freely surrenders himself up to the hands of Almighty Justice, confessing that he is a rebel and a sinner. That is the first thing we have to note in his confessionthat he made it to God secretly and spontaneously. And all he said openly was that he was a sinner.

Again what did he confess? He confessed, as our text tells us, that he was a sinner. Now, how suitable is this prayer for us! For is there a lip here present that this confession will not suitGod be merciful to me a sinner? Do you saythe prayer will suit the harlot, when, after a life of sin, rottenness is in her bones and she is dying in despairthat prayer suits her lips. Yes, but my Friend, it will suit your lips and mine, too. If you know your heart and I know mine, the prayer that will suit her will suit us also. You have never committed the sins which the Pharisee disowned. You have neither been extortionate, nor unjust, nor an adulterer. You have never been even as the Publican, but nevertheless the word sinner will still apply to you. And you will feel it to be so if you are in a right condition.

Remember how much you have sinned against light. It is true the harlot has sinned more openly than you but had she such light as you have had? Do you think she had such an early education and such training as you have received? Did she ever receive such checking of conscience and such guarding of Providence as those which have watched over your career? This much I must confess for myselfI do and must feel a peculiar heinousness in my own sin for I sin against light, against conscience and more, against the love of God received and against the mercy of God promised. Come forward, you greatest among saints and answer this questiondoes not this prayer suit you? I hear you answer, without one moments pauseYes, it suits me now. And until I die my quivering lips must often repeat the petition, Lord have mercy upon me a sinner. Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you, use this prayer today, for it must suit you all.

Merchant, have you no sins of business to confess? Woman, have you no household sins to acknowledge? Child of many prayers, have you no offense against father and mother to confess? Have we loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength? And have we each loved our neighbor as ourselves? Oh let us close our lips as to any boasting and when we open them, let these be the first words that escape from them, I have sinned, O Lord. I have broken Your Commandments. Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner. But mark, is it not a strange thing that the Holy Spirit should teach a man to plead his sinnership before the Throne of God? One would think that when we come before God we should try to talk a little of our virtues.

Who would suppose that when a man was asking for mercy he would say of himself, I am a sinner? Why, surely, reason would prompt him to say, Lord have mercy upon me. There is some good point about me. Lord have mercy upon me. I am not worse than my neighbors. Lord have mercy upon me. I will try to be better. Is it not against reason, is it not marvelously above reason, that the Holy Spirit should teach a man to urge at the Throne of Grace that which seems to be against his plea, the fact that he is a sinner? And yet, dear Brethren, if you and I want to be heard, we must come to Christ as sinners.

Do not let us attempt to make ourselves better than we are. When we come to Gods Throne, let us not for one moment seek to gather any of the false jewels of our pretended virtuesrags are the garments of sinners. Confession is the only music that must come from our lipsGod be merciful to MEa sinner. That must be the only character in which I can

pray to God. Now, are there not many here who feel that they are sinners and are groaning, sighing and lamenting because the weight of sin lies on their conscience? Brothers and Sisters, I am glad you feel yourself to be a sinner, for you have the key of the kingdom in your hands!

Your sense of sinnership is your only title to mercy. Come, I beseech you, just as you areyour nakedness is your only claim on Heavens wardrobe. Your hunger is your only claim on Heavens granaries, your poverty is your only claim on Heavens eternal riches. Come just as you are, with nothing of your own except your sinfulness and plead that before the ThroneGod be merciful to me a sinner. This is what this man confessedthat he was a sinner and he pleaded itmaking the burden of his confession to be the matter of his plea before God.

Now again, how does he come? What is the posture that he assumes? The first thing I would have you notice is that he stood afar off. What did he do that for? Was it not because he felt himself a separated man? We have often made general confessions in the temple, but there never was a confession accepted, except it was particular, personal and heartfelt. There were the people gathered together for the accustomed service of worship. They join in a Psalm of praise, but the poor Publican stood far away from them. They unite in the order of prayer. Still he could not go near them. No, he was come there for himself and he must stand by himself. Like the wounded deer that seeks the deepest glades of the forest where it may bleed and die alone in profound solitude, so did this poor Publican seem to feel he must be alone.

You notice he does not say anything about other people in his prayer. God be merciful to me, he says. He does not say one of a company of sinners, but a sinner, as if there were not another sinner in all the world. Mark this, my Hearer, that you must feel yourself solitary and alone before you can ever pray this prayer acceptably. Has the Lord ever picked you out in a congregation? Has it seemed to you in this Hall as if there were a great black wall round about you and you were closed in with the preacher and with your God and as if every shaft from the preachers bow was leveled at you and every threat meant for you and every solemn upbraiding was an upbraiding for you? If you have felt this, I will congratulate you. No man ever prayed this prayer aright unless he prayed alone, unless he said God be merciful to me, as a solitary, lonely sinner. The Publican stood afar off.

Note the next thing. He would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven. That was because he dare not, not because he would not. He would have done it if he dared. How remarkable it is that repentance takes all the daring out of men. We have seen fellows very daredevils before they were touched by Sovereign Grace who have become afterwards the most trembling and conscientious men with the most tender conscience that one could imagine. Men who were careless, bragging and defying God, have become as humble as little children and even afraid to lift their eyes to Heaven though once they sent their oaths and curses there.

But why did he not dare to lift his eyes? It was because he was dejected in his spiritso oppressed and burdened that he could not look up. Is that your case, my Friend, this morning? Are you afraid to pray? Do you feel as if you could not hope that God would have mercy on you, as if the least gleam of hope was more light than you could possibly bearas if your eyes were so used to the darkness of doubt and despondency, that even one stolen ray seemed to be too much for your poor weak vision? Ah, well, fear not, for happy shall it be for you. You are only following the Publican in his sad experience now and the Lord who helps you to follow him in the confession, shall help you to rejoice with him in the absolution.

Note what else he did. He smote upon his breast. He was a good theologian. He was a real doctor of divinity. What did he smite his breast for? Because he knew where the mischief layin his breast. He did not smite upon his brow as some men do when they are perplexed, as if the mistake were in their understanding. Many a man will blame his understanding while he will not blame his heart and say, Well, I have made a mistake. I have certainly been doing wrong, but I am a good-hearted fellow at the bottom. This man knew where the mischief lay and he smote the right place

*Here on my heart the burden lies.*

He smote upon his breast as if he were angry with himself. He seemed to say, Oh, that I could smite you, my ungrateful Heart, the harder, that you have loved sin rather than God. He did not do penance and yet it was a kind of penance upon himself when he smote his breast again and again and cried Alas! Alas! Woe is me that I should ever have sinned against my GodGod be merciful to me a sinner. Now, can you come to God like this, my dear Friend? Oh, let us all draw near to God in this fashion. You have enough, my Brother, to make you stand alone for there have been sins in which you and I have stood each of us in solitary guilt. There are iniquities known only to ourselves which we never told to the partner of our own bosom, nor to our own parents or brothers, nor yet to the friend with whom we took sweet counsel.

If we have sinned thus alone, let us go to our chambers and confess alonethe husband apart and the wife apart, the father apart and the child apart. Let us each one wail for himself. Brothers and Sisters, leave off to accuse one another. Cease from the bickering of your censoriousness and from the slanders of your envy. Rebuke yourselves and not your fellows. Rend your own hearts and not the reputation of your neighbors. Come, let each man now look to his own case and not to the case of another. Let each cry, Lord, have mercy upon me, as here I stand alone, a sinner. And have you not good reason to cast down your eyes? Does it not seem sometimes too much for us ever to look to Heaven again? We

have blasphemed God, some of us, and even imprecated curses on our own limbs and eyes. And when those things come back to our memory we may well be ashamed to look up. Or if we have been preserved from the crime of open blasphemyhow often have you and I forgotten God! How often have we neglected prayer! How have we broken His Sabbaths and left His Bible unread!

Surely these things, as they flash across our memory, might constrain us to feel that we cannot lift up so much as our eyes towards Heaven. And as for smiting our breast, what man or woman is there among us that need not do it? Let us be angry with ourselves because we have provoked God to be angry with us. Let us be in wrath with the sins that have brought ruin upon our souls. Let us drag the traitors out and put them at once to a summary death. They deserve it well. They have been our ruin. Let us be their destruction. He smote upon his breast and said, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

There is one other feature in this mans prayer which you must not overlook. What reason had he to expect that God would have any mercy upon him? The Greek explains more to us than the English does and the original word here might be translatedGod be propitiated to me a sinner. There is in the Greek word a distinct reference to the doctrine of atonement. It is not the Unitarians prayerGod be merciful to me, it is more than thatit is the Christians prayer, God be propitiated towards me, a sinner. There is, I repeat it, a distinct appeal to the atonement and the mercy seat in this short prayer. Friend, if we would come before God with our confessions, we must take care that we plead the blood of Christ.

There is no hope for a poor sinner apart from the Cross of Jesus. We may cry, God be merciful to me, but the prayer can never be answered apart from the Victim offered, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. When you have your eye upon the mercy seat, take care to have your eye upon the Cross, too. Remember that the Cross is, after all, the mercy seat, that Mercy never was enthroned, until she did hang upon the Cross crowned with thorns. If you would find pardon, go to dark Gethsemane and see your Redeemer sweating, in deep anguish, gouts of gore. If you would have peace of conscience, go to Gabbatha the pavement and see your Saviors back flooded with a stream of blood.

If you would have the last best rest to your conscience, go to Golgothasee the murdered victim as He hangs upon the Cross, with hands and feet and side all pierced, as every wound is gaping wide with extreme misery. There can be no hope for mercy apart from the Victim offered even Jesus Christ the Son of God. Oh, come. Let us one and all approach the mercy seat and plead the blood. Let us each go and say, Father, I have sinned. Have mercy upon me, through Your Son. Come, drunkard, give me your hand. We will go together. Harlot, give me your hand, too. And let us likewise approach the Throne. And you, professing Christians, come you also, be not ashamed of your company. Let us come before His presence with many tears, none of us accusing our fellows, but each one accusing himself. And let us plead the blood of Jesus Christ, which speaks peace and pardon to every troubled conscience.

Careless Man, I have a word with you before I have done on this point. You say, Well, that is a good prayer, certainly, for a man who is dying. When a poor fellow has the cholera and sees black death staring him in the face, or when he is terrified and thunderstruck in the time of storm, or when he finds himself amidst the terrible confusion and alarm of a perilous catastrophe or a sudden accident, while drawing near to the gates of death. Then it is only right that he should say, Lord have mercy upon me.

Ah, Friend, the prayer must be suitable to you, then, since you are a dying man. It must be suitable to you, for you know not how near you are to the borders of the grave. Oh, if you did but understand the frailty of life and the elusiveness of that poor prop on which you are resting, you would say, Alas for my soul! If the prayer will suit me dying, it must suit me now. For I am dying even this day and know not when I may come to the last gasp.

Oh, says one, I think it will suit a man that has been a very great sinner. Correct, my Friend and therefore, if you knew yourself, it would suit you. You are quite correct in saying that it wont suit any but great sinners. And if you dont feel yourself to be a great sinner, I know you will never pray it. But there are some here that feel themselves to be what you ought to feel and know that you are. Such will, by grace, use the prayer with an emphasis this morning, putting a tear upon each letter and a sigh upon each syllable as they cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner. But mark, my Friend, you may smile contemptuously on the man that makes this confession, but he shall go from this house justified, while you shall go away still in your sins, without a hope, without a ray of joy to cheer your unchastened spirit.

II. Having thus briefly described this confession, I come more briefly still to notice the ABSOLUTION which God gave. Absolution from the lips of man I do believe is little short of blasphemy. There is in the Prayer Book of the Church of England an absolution which is essentially Popish, which I should think must be almost a verbatim extract from the Roman missal. I do not hesitate to say that there was never anything more blasphemous printed in Holywell Street than the absolution that is to be pronounced by a clergyman over a dying man. And it is positively frightful to think that any persons calling themselves Christians should rest easy in a Church until they have done their utmost to get that most excellent book thoroughly reformed and revised and to get the Popery purged out of it.

But there is such a thing as absolution, my Friends and the Publican received it. He went to his house justified rather than the other. The other had nothing of peace revealed to his heart. This poor man had all and he went to his house justified. It does not say that he went to his house having eased his mindthat is true, but morehe went to his house justified. What does that mean? It so happens that the Greek word here used is the one which the Apostle Paul always employs to set out the great doctrine of the righteousness of Jesus Christeven the righteousness which is of God by faith. The fact is that the moment the man prayed the prayer every sin he had ever done was blotted out of Gods book so that it did not stand on the record against him. And more, the moment that prayer was heard in Heaven, the man was reckoned to be a righteous man.

All that Christ did for him was cast about his shoulders to be the robe of his beauty. That moment all the guilt that he had ever committed himself was washed entirely away and lost forever. When a sinner believes in Christ, his sins positively cease to be and what is more wonderful, they all cease to be, as Kent says in those well known lines

*Heres pardon for transgressions past,   
It matters not how black their cast,   
And, O my soul with wonder view   
For sins to come heres pardon too.*

They are all swept away in one solitary instant. The crimes of many yearsextortions, adulteries, or even murderwiped away in an instant. For you will notice the absolution was instantaneously given. God did not say to the manNow you must go and perform some good works and then I will give you absolution. He did not say as the Pope does, Now you must swelter awhile in the fires of Purgatory and then I will let you out. No, He justified him then and there. The pardon was given as soon as the sin was confessed.

Go, My son, in peace. I have not a charge against you. You are a sinner in your own estimation, but you are none in Mine. I have taken all your sins away and cast them into the depth of the sea and they shall be mentioned against you no more forever. Can you tell what a happy man the Publican was, when all in a moment he was changed? If you may reverse the figure used by Milton, he seemed himself to have been a loathsome toad, but the touch of the Fathers mercy made him rise to angelic brightness and delight. And he went out of that house with his eye upward, no longer afraid. Instead of the groan that was on his heart, he had a song upon his lips. He no longer walked alone, he sought out the godly and he said, Come and hear, you that fear God and I will tell you what He has done for my soul.

He did not smite upon his breast, but he went home to get down his harp and play upon the strings and praise his God. You would not have known that he was the same man, if you had seen him going outand all that was done in a minute. But, says one, do you think he knew for certain that all his sins were forgiven? Can a man know that? Certainly he can. And there are some here that can bear witness that this is true. They have known it themselves. The pardon which is sealed in Heaven is re-sealed in our own conscience. The mercy which is recorded above is made to shed its light into the darkness of our hearts. Yes, a man may know on earth that his sins are forgiven and may be as sure that he is a pardoned man as he is of his own existence.

And now I hear a cry from someone saying, And may I be pardoned this morning? And may I know that I am pardoned? May I be so pardoned that all shall be forgottenI who have been a drunkard, a swearer, or what not? May I have all my transgressions washed away? May I be made sure of Heaven and all that in a moment? Yes, my Friend. You believe in the Lord Jesus Christ if you will stand where you are and just breathe this prayer out, Lord, have mercy! God be merciful to me a sinner, through the blood of ChristI tell you, Man, God never did deny that prayer yet. If it came out of honest lips He never shuts the gates of mercy on it. It is a solemn litany that shall be used as long as time shall last and it shall pierce the ears of God as long as there is a sinner to use it. Come, be not afraid, I beseech you, use the prayer before you leave this Hall. Stand where you areendeavor to realize that you are all alone and if you feel that you are guiltynow let the prayer ascend.

Oh, what a marvelous thing, if from the thousands of hearts here present, so many thousand prayers might go up to God! Surely the angels themselves never had such a day in Paradise as they would have today, if every one of us could, by Gods grace, truly and sincerely make that confession! Some are doing it. I know they areGod is helping them. And Sinner, do you stay away? You, who have most need to comedo you refuse to join with us? Come, Brother, come. You say you are too vile. No, Brother, you cannot be too vile to say, God be merciful to me. Perhaps you are no viler than we are. At any rate, this we can saywe feel ourselves to be viler than you and we want you to pray the same prayer that we have prayed. Ah, says one, I cannot. My heart wont yield to that. I cannot. But Friend, if God is ready to have mercy upon you, yours must be a hard heart if it is not ready to receive His mercy. Spirit of God, breathe on the hard heart and melt it now! Help the man who feels that carelessness is overcoming himhelp him to get rid of it from this hour.

You are struggling against it. You are saying, Would to God I could pray that. I could go back to be a boy or a child again and then I could. But I have got hardened and grown gray in sin and prayer would be hypocrisy in me. No, Brother, no, it would not. If you can but cry it from your heart, I beseech you say it! Many a man thinks he is a hypocrite when he is not and is afraid that he is not sincere when his very fear is a proof of his sincerity. But, says one, I have no redeeming trait in my character at all. I am glad you think so! Still you may use the prayer,

God be merciful to me. But it will be a useless prayer, says one. My Brother, I assure you not in my own name, but in the name of God, my Father and your Father, it shall not be a useless prayer.

As sure as God is God, he that comes unto Christ He will in no wise cast out. Come with me now, I beseech you. Tarry no longer. The heart of God is yearning over you. You are His child and He will not give you up. You have run from Him these many years but He has never forgotten you. You have resisted all His warnings until now and He is almost weary, but still He has said concerning you, How shall I make you as Admah; how shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together

*Come humbled sinner, in whose breast   
A thousand thoughts revolve.   
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,   
And make this last resolve:   
Ill go to Jesus; though my sin   
Has like a mountain rose,   
I know His courts; Ill enter in,   
Whatever may oppose.   
Prostrate Ill lie before His face,   
And there my sins confess;   
Ill tell Him Im a wretch undone,   
Without His Sovereign Grace.*

Go home to your houseslet everyonepreacher, deacon, peopleyou of the Church and you of the worldeveryone of you, go home and before you feast your bodies, pour out your hearts before God and let this one cry go up from all our lips, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I pause. Bear with me.   
I must detain you a few moments. Let us use this prayer as our own now. Oh that it might come up before the Lord at this time as the earnest supplication of every heart in this assembly! I will repeat itnot as a text, but as a prayeras my own prayer, as your prayer. Will each one of you take it personally for himself? Let everyone, I entreat you, who desires to offer the prayer and can join in it, utter at its close an audible Amen.

Let us prayGOD - BE - MERCIFUL - TO - ME - A - SINNER. [And the people did, with deep solemnity, say, AMEN.]   
P.S.The preacher hopes that he who reads will feel compelled most solemnly to do likewise.   
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #2687 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TOO GOOD TO BE SAVED!   
NO. 2687

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, AUGUST 12, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 17, 1881.

**I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. Luke 18:14.**

THE publican was justified rather than the Pharisee. The outwardly worse man of the two was accepted rather than the one who was apparently better. This man went down to his house justified rather than the other. Observe, dear Friends, our Saviors gentle way of describing the contrast between these two men. He says that the publican was justified rather than the other, but we all know that behind this mild and lenient expression, there is the sad and solemn Truth of God that the Pharisee was not justified at all. It is concerning that fact that I am about to speak to you. The publican was justified and the Pharisee was not, yet our Lord only said, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other. It will be true wisdom on our part, also, to sometimes state a Truth in the very mildest way possible. A Scriptural Doctrine loses nothing of its effect by being tenderly expressedindeed, a forcible Truth of God may even have its force increased by being rather understated than overstated. Our Lord Jesus Christ knew when to use this holy art and He did so on this occasion and, therefore, you and I will be wise if we do the same when a fitting opportunity occurs.

Notice, further, dear Friends, that the pith, the marrow, the very center of the blessing that we expect to get in worship is justification. To be accepted of God, to be regarded as just, to be esteemed by Him as doing the right thingthis is what we ought to seek whenever we come together for worship! And in that sense the publican, with his earnest cry for mercy, was justifiedthat is, he was accepted by God, he was regarded as one who had been made justwhile the Pharisee, who stood there ostentatiously publishing his own excellences, was not justified, was not accepted, was not considered a just man and did not receive from God any of the favors which He is accustomed to give to those who rightly worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The reason why the Pharisee did not receive that which is the end of all worshipnamely, acceptance with God, and justification in His sightwas that he reckoned himself too good to be justified. According to his own opinion, he was altogether too righteous a man to need Gods favor and mercy. And I want now to speak to any of you who think you are too good to be saved. I am always preaching to sinners and I have had the great delight of seeing many and many a sinner taken in the Gospel net and saved. Now I want to talk to those who are scarcely sinners except that, by way of compliment, they acknowledge that they are. Yes, they say, we are all sinners. And if they go to church, they say, Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners. Yet, all the while, they neither look miserable, nor are they really conscious that they are sinners in the sight of God and already under condemnation. I want to speak especially to this class of persons. It is a great pity that it should be so, yet there are many people who, in their own estimation, are much too good to be saved, too good ever to be justified, too good ever to go to Heaven! There may be some such persons here. If so, may God the Holy Spirit bless to them what I have to say in Christs name!

I. My first remark is that THERE ARE STILL SUCH PERSONS AS THIS PHARISEE.   
There are still in the world many persons who, in their own opinion, are too good to be justified, too good to be saved. They come to this condition because they compare themselves with others. This Pharisee said, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. He felt himself to be quite a saint compared with the publican. He went up many degrees in his own estimation when he thought of what a wicked extortioner that publican had been! And he remembered someone who had been an adulterer and another person who had been unjustand contrasting himself with these people, he felt that he was the most respectable individual whom he knewa man to be held in very high esteem! He felt that God ought to be thanked for making such a man and if nobody else would do it, he would do it himself, for that was a duty which ought to be discharged at once. So remarkable a specimen of human excellence ought not to be left on the face of the earth, ungratefully forgotten by menand as many of them did seem to forget him and not to see his excellences, he would, himself, bless God that there was, at any rate, one person in the world who was all he ought to be, if not a little more! He reckoned himself to be so good because he compared himself with other men.

My dear Hearer, are you very good by the same sort of measurement? Are you superlatively excellent because you judge yourself by a similar standard? If so, let me ask you kindly to make use of that standard in another way by comparing yourself, not with those whom you regard as your inferiors, but with those whom you must acknowledge to be your superiors. You have surely read some biographies of really devout, earnest, holy, consecrated men whose lives much exceed yours in all that is of true worth. So, if you will look up instead of looking down, I think you will soon begin to say, Ah, I am far short of their standard! I am nothing like those men were. I am not living such a careful, prayerful, watchful, self-denying, consecrated life as they lived. Let this thought take a little of the conceit out of you. Begin to think that you are not quite so good as you thought you were and it may do you some service if you meditate for a while upon that fact.   
But, you say, we cannot all be expected to come up to their standard. Ah, but you are expected to do that, and a great deal more, for, if you are going to be justified by your works, you will have to go far above their standard! The true standard by which you are to measure yourself is not even the most saintly of the saints, nor the most devoted of the martyrs and confessors. The standard for any man who would be saved by his own righteousness is Gods holy Law! Listen to itYou shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. Have you come anywhere near that standard? I am sure you have not. You have fallen far short of what God demands of you, so what does it matter though you say, I am better than some people are? You are evidently worse than others are and you are much worseinfinitely worse than you ought to be! And the perfect Law of God, if you are to be justified by it, requires a perfect obedience to all its commandsand that you can never render. O dear Sirs, you are laboring under a terrible mistake! You are, in your own judgment, superlatively good, but you come to that conclusion only by comparing yourselves among yourselvesa process which, as the Apostle Paul tells us, is not wise. Measure yourselves by the Law of God and you will shrink into nothing at once if you are a man of honor, wisdom and sense.   
There are some who think themselves much too good to be justified by God and they are under that delusion because they have set one duty above another. Listen to this Pharisees boastI fast twice in the week. Among the Pharisees of our Lords day, I believe that Monday and Thursday were the regular fast days. I have heard that among certain modern Pharisees, Friday is the appointed time for fasting, but that is a matter about which I do not know much. The Pharisee evidently felt that it was a most important thing to fast twice in the weekand then he added, I give tithes of all that I possess. There were certain tithes that were demanded by Gods Law, but he seems to imply that he did more than was required of him, for he gave tithes of all that he had coming in. I daresay that, like the rest of the Pharisees, he had tithed the mint, and anise, and cuminprobably, all together it did not amount to much, and in comparison with, the weightier matters of the Lawjudgment, mercy and faithwhich he had omitted, it was as nothing at all. But he was very careful to pay the tithe of his mint, anise and cumin.   
That might have been to his credit if he had not set it up as being the chief and main thing to be put in the front, the choice article to be exhibited in the window to let everybody see what a remarkably excellent person he was! I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. He did not say anything about the widows houses that he had devoured, nor about the pretense and hypocrisy that lurked behind his long prayers. He did not say anything about his pride and his contempt for his fellow men, which he even dared to express in what he called his prayers. No, but he brought certain other things to the frontout of all true proportionand then he felt himself to be wonderfully good. Well, now, we know some persons who are most regular in their attendance at a place of worship. Perhaps someone asks, Is not that a good thing for me to do? Yes, it is an excellent thing, but I do not say much about it if you give short weight in your shop, or if you tell lies in your home, or anywhere else, or if you are living an unchaste life. There are other things to be thought of besides going to a meeting on Sunday. Oh, but we have been baptized and we take the communion. Yes, I know you do and it is a very important thing that you should do so if you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and if you are really living as true Believers should live. But if you put any religious ceremony to the front and omit the more vital matters, it will not do!   
Then you know there are some persons who say, Well, Sir, I was baptized as an infant, I was confirmed by the bishop, I have always attended the parish church, I give my guinea to every contribution, I have family prayer, I haveI hardly like to say how many good things I have. Just so. That is the way with some peoplethey put a certain set of duties into the front, while other duties are neglected. And they bring to God one duty blood-red with the murder of another. There are some who have given to God what they have gained by lying and trickery in their business, or they have given to God what they have ground out of the bones and marrow of the poor. Is it not often so? But it is not to be expected that God will accept either ourselves or our offerings because we choose to put one set of external duties into the front and then say, We are superlatively good. It is a dreadful delusion! May God save you from it, my Friend, if you are under it! Remember the solemn words of the Lord Jesus upon this very pointThese ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.   
There are also some persons who reckon themselves to be very good because they conceive themselves to have done almost more than they ought. There is one family of the Good-Enoughs and there is another family of the Too-Goods. They are cousins, I believe. Certainly, they are very closely related. This Pharisee belonged to the family of the TooGoods. I have already reminded you that he said, I fast twice in the week. Now, according to the law of the Jews, they were to fast once in the yearso this man gave a hundred days for one, for he fasted twice in the week. They were to give a tithe of the produce of their land, but he did more than that. He said, I give tithes of all that I possess. Surely, there is a balance to my credit. If I do fall short anywhere, I have gone over the mark in some other things and have done more than was required of me.   
Alas, it is often the characteristic of hypocrites that they overdo one part and underdo another! Remember that striking simile in Hosea 7:8 Ephraim is a cake not turned. What happens to a cake that is not turned? Why, it is done too much on one side and it is not done at all on the other! It is burnt black upon the coals on one side and the other side is dough just as it was when it was put down to bake! How many there are who always keep looking at their burnt side! Oh, they cry, we are baked and more than baked. Yes, but look at the other side of you, which God also seesthere, you are underdone. Oh, that we might have sense enough to look at ourselves in a true light and to see the whole of ourselvesfor then our foolish self-righteousness would soon vanish!   
Let me speak to these very good people a little longer. This Pharisee, though he was so very good in his own esteemcould not be justified because he did not pray. Someone asks, perhaps, Did he not pray? No. He went up to the Temple to pray, but he did not pray. There was not a word of prayer in all that he said. And you, my Friend, may have knelt down every morning and every evening since you were a child, and yet never have prayed, for prayer is the speaking of a poverty-stricken heart to a rich Godthe actual asking of something from Godbut you have not felt that you needed anything from Him, so you have not asked for it! You have never cried out of your heart unto the Lord. You have uttered a certain form of words and that has been the end of it. You may say your prayers everyday till you die and yet never have prayed at all. How could this Pharisee expect that he should be saved when he had never prayed?   
And, next, he did not love his fellow men. And it is a rule with God that if we love not our fellows, we shall not have their love. If we forgive not our erring brother, neither will the Lord forgive us. This Pharisee did not love his brotherhe put all the rest of mankind into one bundle and he said, God, I thank you that I am not as other menthe whole lot of them. He himself stood there alonehe was the one man for whom God was to be thanked! He did not love his fellows, or else he would have thought better of them and he would not have put them all down as unworthy to be associated with himself, nor would he have set himself up above them all. Specially, he did not love that publican. He was horrified to find him standing so near him and he uttered, even in the House of God, a contemptuous expression concerning his fellow sinner. How could God send a man home justified when he was unloving and without sympathy for his fellow man?   
Notice, also, that this Pharisee did not ask for mercy. Look again at his pretended prayer. There is not anything in it concerning mercy. He said, God, I thank you, but he did not cry, Give me mercy. Grant me forgiveness. Pardon all my transgressions against you. There was not a word of petition or supplicationthen how should God give the man that which he never asked for? How should He bestow justification on one who never sought it?

Perhaps the most fatal flaw of all was that there was no reference to an atonement in his devotion. He said, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, but there was no plea that the atonement offered on the altar might avail for him. Yet, deep down in the poor publicans prayer, there lies an allusion to the Propitiation or Mercy Seat. The penitent cry, God be merciful to me a sinner, has in it the veiled thought of the great propitiatory Sacrifice! But how shall God hear the prayer of the man who does not plead the blood of Jesus, nor make any mention of His great Sacrifice for sin? The Pharisee was altogether too good in his own esteem, so he was not justified. I wonder whether there are any such people here?   
II. Secondly and but briefly, let me say concerning such persons as this Pharisee, that THEY CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED.   
I can support my statement by the following reasons. First, for God to justify them would be to dishonor Himself by putting Himself in the place of a debtor to themand that can never be the case. This man as good as pleaded, if he pleaded at all, that God should accept and justify him because he had not done certain things, but he had done other things therefore God was, as it were, indebted to him for his extraordinary excellence! But Man, Woman, do you think that God will ever be debtor to you? Will you dare to stand before your Maker and talk to Him as if you had some merits of your own which deserved commendation from Him? Probably you would not say that in so many words, but there are many who are practically saying as much as that. They kick against the Doctrine of Election, for instance. They say that for God to save one person, and not another, is wrong, for they have as much claim upon Him as others havewhich is true, for they have no claim at all, just as others have none at all! Yet their very opposition to Gods exercise of His Sovereign rights proves that, deep down in their hearts, they believe they have some claim upon Him and that God is, in some sense, their debtor. But, dear Friends, you can never be justified while you talk or act in such a way as that! God will freely give Heaven, itself, away! He will give His own Son as the free gift of His Grace, but He will have no dealings with you if you think you have any claims upon Him. Claims upon Him? Wretches who deserved, long ago, to have been cast into Hellhow can you talk about your own merits when you appear before the infinitely holy God?   
Further, God cannot justify these self-righteous people because, if He did, it would be as good as saying that Christs Atonement was not necessary. If you can go to Heaven by your own works, why did Christ die? If you can get there by fasting, prayer, religious observances and moralities, then yonder Cross with Christ upon it was a superfluity and a mistake! There was no need for any plan of salvation and no need of an atonement by blood, if, after all, men might be good enough to save themselves! But we know that there is no salvation apart from Christs atoning Sacrifice, so God cannot justify the self-righteous when, in order to do so, He would have to cast a slur upon His own wisdom and upon His own well-beloved Son. You good people, you who are too good to be savedI mean, too good in your own esteemyou cannot be justified!   
Further, if God were to justify those who are like this Pharisee was, He would be either making two ways to Heaven or else shutting sinners out. You see, dear Friends, God must shut the sinners out if the door into Heaven is only for the good, or else He must make a special entrance for the gentlefolka little private door where qualified people can go in by presenting tickets describing their own merits. But, if that were to be the case, we would have to get the Bible altered, for this blessed Book tells us that there is only one way of salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, says that He is the Way. The Bible says that there is only one foundation and that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter, speaking to the rulers and elders of Israel, said, This is the stone which was set at naught 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.   
Suppose that sinners are to be saved partly by works and partly by Grace? Then what is to become of those who have no good works to plead? Shall they be lost? No, yet, if they are to be saved, they must be saved by Grace alone. Then there must be two ways to save mensome by Gracethat is the way for sinners. Some by Grace and worksthat is the way for respectable people like some of you. Then we should have two gates to Heaven and if two, why not twenty? And then, at last, it would come to this, that we might have twenty thousand different ways to Heaven! I have seen a book entitled, Every Mans Own Lawyer, and we might in time have another book upon the subject, Every Man His Own Savior. That is what it would practically come to, at last, if there was more than one way of salvation! But it is not so and never shall be so. There is one way of salvation for all who come to God and that is by faith in Jesus Christ! And if you will not walk in this narrow wayif you are too good to travel along this pilgrim pathyou shall perish in your accursed self-righteousness! Accursed, indeed, it is, for it has shut multitudes out of all hope of mercy because they have thought themselves too good to be saved!   
If the self-righteous are to be saved, we must alter the Bible in other places besides those I have quoted. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. You must strike that passage out and so you must the reference to Him that justifies the ungodly. It must no longer be said, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, but we shall have to make David say, Blessed is he who has never sinned at all, but whose merits deserve eternal life. Poor David would have come off badly under such a rule!   
You will also have to alter the Church as well as the Bible. I must go out and most of my Brothers and Sisters will have to go out, for we shall not be able to get along with such good people as you are! We have all been sinners and God has had mercy upon usand we love Him much because He has forgiven us muchand when you self-righteous folk come in, you will not like to associate with us. And when we pray, God be merciful to me, a sinner, you will feel ashamed of us. Yet, mark you, the Church will not be altered in order to please you!   
If it were, we would also have to alter many of our best hymns. We could not sing the hymns we have sung this evening. Rock of Ages also would have to go, for we should feel that Toplady made a mistake when he wrote it. And Jesus, Lover of My Soul, would have to follow it. If this is the right systemif the good people are to come to Christ with their own goodness and to be saved because they are so goodthen what is to become of the whole of our Hymn-Book? Why, everything will be turned upside down! But mark thisthe turning upside down will come in another way. It is you self-righteous ones who will be turned upside down! And if you will continue to be deluded and to believe a lie, you will have to suffer for it. I pray that God, in His mercy, may abase you now with true humility and lay you low at the feet of Jesus, for, if not, you will have to be abased at the coming of the Lord, in the Day when He shall judge all things according to Infallible Truth of Godand your fancied righteousness will then melt away like hoar-frost at the rising of the sunand you will cry out in despair, Woe is me! Woe is me! I thought myself good and excellent, but now I am cast out, while sinners, whom I despised, are brought in to feast on His wondrous mercy forevermore!   
III. Now I shall conclude by observing, concerning these people who are, in their own esteem, too good to be justified by Grace and who do not, therefore, seek Gods Grace, that IT IS MOST FITTING THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED.   
I will tell you why it is most fitting and, first, because it is taking them on their own standing. A man ought never to object to be taken at his own valuation. I once had an experience which may illustrate the way in which God will deal with men who are like this Pharisee. There came to me a gentlemana very great gentlemanwho wished to become a student of the College. He told me that in all probability, I had never had such a remarkable genius as he was offering himself as a student. Of course I was amazed and deeply gratified. I asked him in what way he could display his genius and he replied that he had been studying for the ministry for many years, that he was most fluent and eloquent and that, if I liked, he would preach me a sermon on the spot upon any subject that I chose to give him. I said, No, I do not think that I could listen to a sermon from you just now, for I have a good many other people waiting to see me. He went on to tell me about his wonderful attainments, but I stopped him and said, I must decline your application. But why? he asked. Well, I answered, we have no such men as you are in the College. We have none of your sort. Well, then, he said, it is time you had. So I told him that the tutors were very ordinary sort of persons and, according to his own account, he knew very much more than they did, to begin with, and I also said that the President of the College was a still more ordinary person and that, considering the way in which I was confounded by his dazzling genius in that short conversation, I really must decline him. It was not possible that we should be able to get on together, for there was nothing that he could learn, as he already knew everything, so there was no need for him to become a student with us.

You may imagine his surprise because I took him on his own footing. He showed himself off to be such a remarkably wonderful man that all I could feel was, I can read you through and through and understand what a fool you are. I did not tell him so, but I met him on his own ground and told him that he was much too good for me to receive into the College. I believe it was right that he should be so answered, for Solomon said, Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. And, oh, how grimly and solemnly will God, at the last, answer every self-righteous fool according to his follyYou say that you did not sin as that publican did. No and, therefore, you did not repent as that publican did. Christ came into the world to save sinners, but, according to your own declaration, you are not one of them, so He did not come to save you. He has shed His blood to wash the filthy, but you say that you are not filthy, so you shall never be washed, you shall forever remain as you are. This will be one way of letting the self-righteous see how God laughs at the calamity of those who have despised His mercy when their fear comes. All their self-righteousness was a mocking and a laughing at Christ and His precious bloodand at Free Grace and the Gospelso the time will come when they will hear another kind of laugh and it will be but fitting that they should.   
It is fitting that the self-righteous should not be justified and they, themselves, cannot wonder at it, because they know that they are unwilling to accept the Gospel. They cannot wonder that they do not have its blessings, for they do not like its terms! There are some of you, I fear, who are not willing to make a confession of your sin. You say that you do not wish to be saved by charity, to be delivered from going down to the Pit by the Sovereign, unmerited Grace of Godyou must have a hand in the matter, somehow, for you think you have some claim upon God! Well, then, do you wonder that what you will not receive is denied you? They who shut their eyes must not marvel if the sun seems no more to shine for them. When men will not hear, they must not be surprised if the voice ceases to speak. Take heed unto yourselves, you who are trusting in your own righteousness, lest God, taking you at your word and seeing you unwilling to accept the blood and righteousness of Christ, may justly give you over to perish in your sin!   
What an awful sight that will bea man everlastingly a martyr to his own pride! Even the demons in Hell might ask, Why did that man come to Hell? Was he unjust? No. Was he an extortioner? No. Was he an adulterer? No. Then, why did he come here? Because he would not go to Heaven by Grace! He thanked God that he was not as other men are, but he has not much to thank God for, now, for he finds himself cast out while many of the other men, whom he despised, are saved. But why did he go to Hell? Only to keep up his own pride, to have his own way and not to bow his neck to Christs righteous rule. When a man sacrifices his life for his country, when a man loses his life on behalf of scienceabove all, when a man is burned to death for God and for the Truth, I can honor himbut when a man loses his soul for the sake of his pride, angels and men may well cover him with everlasting contempt!   
O Sirs, I pray you, if pride is keeping you out of Heaven, give it up and cast yourselves down at Jesus feet! The old fable tells us of a fox that entered into a vineyard by a very small hole. He was very thin, then, but he ate so many of the grapes that he grew to be twice his former size and could not get out again! He could have been caught and killed because He had grown too big to make his escape, so there was nothing for him to do but to starve himself down to his former size and so get out to a place of safety. And if you have made yourselves so big with your own righteousness that you cannot get through that strait and narrow way of yielding to Christ, trusting Him and obeying Himthen you must shrink and starve yourself down to this size. I pray God speedily to bring you down to it till you, too, shall be a bankrupt sinner, an emptied sinner, a condemned sinnerand then shall just look to Christ upon the Cross and live, for   
*There is life for a look at the Crucified One, There is life at this moment for you*   
if you will but look there for it! But if you will look only to yourself for it, you will perish in your iniquity and your blood will be upon your own head. God bless this word to all whom it concerns, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 18:1-14.**

Verse 1. And He spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint. Not to faint in their expectation of answers to their supplications and, therefore, give up prayer, but to persevere in presenting their petitions at the Throne of Grace because prayer is never lost labor. There may be a time during which God does not appear to answer prayer, but He will ultimately answer it. Therefore men ought always to pray, and not to faint in prayer. If they do not pray, they will faint in many ways. Their courage will faint. All their hope as to the future will faint and fall into a dead swoon, as it were. So, dear Friends, you have your choice between praying and fainting! The doctrine our Savior laid down was that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. And this is the parable which He related in illustration of that Truth of God.

2. Saying, There was in a city a judge who feared not God, neither regarded man. He was a most unfit person to be a judge, as many in Eastern cities still are. They are ready enough to take bribes, but they are not so prompt in giving just judgments. They generally attend to the business of the rich and the powerful, but neglect the poor and needy. So was it with this judge who, feared not God, neither regarded man.

3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. Probably someone had come and taken away from her the little bit of land that her husband had left her, upon the produce of which she and the children might have lived, and she could not get it back. So she comes to the judge, and cries, Avenge me of my adversary.

4. And he would not for a while. He had plenty of applicants who could pay him better than this poor woman could, so he disregarded her petition. But he little knew that, in her, he had to deal with a woman who meant to be heard and who intended to press her suit until she won it. She was evidently a very determined character. Though a broken-hearted widow, yet she was not broken-spirited even though the judge refused, for a while, to attend to her plea.

4, 5. But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. She came again and again, and again and againshe would not leave off coming, for she meant to have the justice she sought and she got it. Now that is the way to pray, as if we would even weary God with our supplications, though we can never do so! It is impossible to weary Him with earnest believing entreaties, yet we must show the same determination in prayer which this importunate widow manifested while pleading with the unjust judge.

6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says. He is unjust, but he is now obliged to be just! He is hard-hearted, but he is compelled to yield! The widow has conquered him, not by her money, but by her importunity! She is there so often that she troubles him and he says he must give in and grant her request.

7. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? He may seem to be slow about it, but when His people cry to Him, He will ultimately hear them if He does not at once. Do not imagine that the children of God will always be laughed at and downtrodden. God will yet arise and take their side. They may be pushed into a comer for a while, but they shall come out into a large room in due season, for God will certainly avenge His own elect.

8. I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? If anybody could find it, He could, for He creates it all and He knows where to look for it, yet there is so little of it that even He, whose eyes can detect the faith that is as small as a grain of mustard seed, can scarcely find it. There is all too little real faith in the world and those who think they have most of it, when they get into troubled waters, soon find they have not any to spareand much that they thought was faith does not turn out to be so. O Brothers and Sisters, how little do we trust our God compared with what He deserves!

9, 10. And He spoke this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the Temple to pray. They were both alike in going up to the Temple, but they were very different in coming back from the Temple. It is a very important thing to come to the House of God in a right state of heart and it is a still better thing to go away from the Lords House really benefited and improved. These two men went up to the Temple with the same objectiveeach of them went there to pray. Both intended to pray, though they did not both do sobut that was their objective.

10. The one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. A tax-gatherer, one of the most hated people in Christs day, because none but the lowest class of Jews would collect taxes for the Romans and, as a general rule, they farmed the taxes and greatly increased them by demanding of the people much more than was due. They were, therefore, held in the worst possible repute. I am not sure that tax-gatherers are the objects of much love anywhere, but, among the Jews, they were detested because they were collecting tribute for the Romans whom the conquered nation abhorred.

11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You, that 1 am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. So it is evident that he noticed one person who was there, though I do not find that the publican took any notice of him. We can tell by this remark that the mind of the Pharisee was wandering from his supposed devotions. It is a bad sign in a so-called worshipper when he knows a great deal about other people who are in the Lords House. I have known many people whose recollection, after a sermon, has been quite as much about who was there and who was not there, as it has been about what was in the sermon, and what was not in it! So this Pharisees eyes went gadding about and he spied out the poor publican, but, after a contemptuous reference to him, he returned to the catalog of his own virtues and excellences.

12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. There his prayer ended and he stood in a most enviable state of contentment, delighted with himself, lost in the contemplation of his own ineffable purity. I think I see him in all his glory, yet I quickly turn to the other part of the Temple, further away from the most sacred place, for there I behold the true worshipper.

13. And the publican, standing afar off. Not afar off from the Pharisee, only, but afar off from the sacred shrine, the innermost Temple, as if unworthy to be there at allthe publican, standing afar off.

13. Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven. That throne of the Highestas if even a glance from his unholy eyes might defile that sacred place! He bowed his eyes downward, as if to read in the earth the record of his sin. He did not dare to look up.

13. But smote upon his breast. His heart smote him and he smote upon his heart.   
13, 14. Saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. The great Lord and Master acts as He would have His true servants do. It was said of some of them that they turned the world upside down and that is exactly what He does! He abases those who exalt themselves and He exalts those who abase themselves. He lifts up the lowly and casts down them of high degree in their own estimationand so shall it be to the end of the world.

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RECEIVING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS A LITTLE CHILD   
NO. 1439

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 20, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Verily I say unto you, Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall by no means enter it.   
Luke 18:17.**

WHEN our Lord blessed the little children He was making His last journey to Jerusalem. It was thus a farewell blessing which He gave to the little ones and it reminds us of the fact that among His parting words to His disciples, before He was taken up, we find the tender charge, Feed My lambs. The ruling passion was strong upon the great Shepherd of Israel, who gathers the lambs with His arms and carries them in His bosom. And it was fitting that while He was making His farewell journey He should bestow His gracious benediction upon the children. Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ is not here among us in Person, but we know where He is and we know that He is clothed with all power in Heaven and in earth with which to bless His people.

Let us, then, draw near to Him this day. Let us seek His touch in the form of fellowship and ask the aid of His intercession. Let us include others in our prayers and among these let us give our children and, indeed, all children, a leading place. We know more of Jesus than the women of Palestine did! Let us, therefore, be even more eager than they were to bring our children to Him that He may bless them and that they may be accepted in Him, even as we are. Jesus waits to bless! He is not changed in Character, or impoverished in Graceas He still receives sinners, so does He still bless childrenand let none of us be content, whether we are parents or teachers, until He has received our children and has so blessed them that we are sure that they have entered the kingdom of God!

Our Savior, when He saw that His disciples were not only backward to admit the children to Him, but even rebuked those who brought them, was much displeased and called them to Him that He might teach them better. He then informed them that instead of the children being regarded as intruders, they were most welcome to Himself and, instead of being interlopers, they had full right of access, for of children and of childlike persons His kingdom was composed. Moreover, He declared that none could enter that kingdom except in the same manner as children enter. He spoke with Divine certainty, using His own expressive, verily, and He spoke with the weight of His own personal authority, I say unto you.

These prefatory expressions are intended to secure our reverent attention to the fact that so far from the admission of children into the kingdom being unusual or strange, no one can find entrance there unless they receive the Gospel as a little child receives it. It is this statement of the Master which affords us a subject for this morning, which, may the Divine Spirit open up to us and impress upon our hearts. I shall speak upon three matters. First, upon the secret thought of the disciples which the Master refuted by the language of the text. Secondly, upon the open declaration of our Lord in the text. And, thirdly, upon the encouragement which He thus gives to us.

I. To begin with, let us deal with THE SECRET THOUGHT OF THE DISCIPLESexpressed by their actions though not spoken in words. And, first, it is pretty clear that the disciples thought the children were too insignificant for the Lords time to be taken up by them. If it had been a prince who wished to come to Jesus, no doubt Peter and the rest of them would have diligently secured him an introduction. But, you see, these were only poor women with babies and small children. If it had been an ordinary person like themselves, they would not have repelled him with rebukes. But mere children! Sucklings and little children! It was too bad for these to be intruded upon the great Teacher!

A word is used about the youthful applicants which may signify children of any age, from sucklings up to 12 yearssurely Jesus had worry enough without the intrusion of these juveniles. He had higher subjects for thought and graver objects of care. The children were so very little they were quite beneath His noticeso the disciples thought in their hearts. But, Brothers and Sisters, if it comes to a matter of insignificance, who among us can hope to win the Divine attention? If we think that children must be little in His sight, what are we? He takes up the isles as a very little thing. To Him the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers! Yes, we are all as things of nothing! If we were humble, we should exclaim, Lord, what is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?

If we dream that the Lord will not notice the little and insignificant, what think we of such a text as thisAre not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Does God care for sparrows and shall He not care for little children? The idea of insignificance must be set aside at once. Though the Lord is high, yet has He respect unto the lowly. But are little children so insignificant? Do they not people Heaven? Is it not your conviction? It is minethat they make up a very considerable part of the population of the skies! Multitudes of infant feet are treading the streets of the New Jerusalem! Snatched from the breast before they had committed actual sindelivered from the toilsome pilgrimage of lifethey always behold the face of our Father which is in Heaven. Of such is the kingdom of God.

Do you call these insignificant? Do you dare despise children who are the most numerous company in the army of the elect? I might turn the tables and call the adults insignificant, among whom there can be found no more than a small remnant who serve the Lord. Besides, many children are spared to grow up to mans estate and, therefore, we must not think a child insignificant. He is the father of the man. In him are great possibilities and capacities. His manhood is as yet undeveloped, but it is there and he that trifles with it mars the man. He who tempts the mind of a boy may destroy the soul of a man! A little error injected into the ear of a youth may become deadly in the man when the slow poison shall at last have touched a vital part. Weeds sown in the furrows of childhood will grow with the young mans growth, ripen in his prime and only decay into a sad corruption when he himself declines.

On the other hand, a Truth of God dropped into a childs heart will there fructify and his manhood shall see the fruit of it. Your child listening in the class to his teachers gentle voice may develop into a Luther and shake the world with his vehement proclamation of the Truth of God! Who among us can tell? At any rate, with the Truth in his heart, the child shall grow up to honor and fear the Lord and thus shall he help to keep alive a godly seed in these evil days. Therefore let no man despise the young or think them insignificant! I claim a front place for them. I ask that if others are kept back, at any rate their feebleness may make room for the little ones! They are the worlds future! The past has been and we cannot alter iteven the present is gone while we gaze on it. Our hope lies in the futuretherefore by your leave, Sirs, room for the children, room for the boys and girls!

Again, I suppose that these grown-up Apostles thought that the childrens minds were too trifling. They are at their play and their childish mirththey will regard it only as a pastime to be folded in Jesus armsit will be mirth to them and they will have no idea of the solemnity of their position. Well, well! Trifling is it? Children are said to be guilty of trifling! Oh, Sirs, and are you not also triflers! If it comes to an examination upon the matter of trifling, who are the greatest triflerschildren or full-grown men and women? What is greater trifling than for a man to live for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, or for a woman to live to dress herself and waste her time in company? No, morewhat is the accumulation of wealth for the sake of it but miserable trifling? Childs play without the amusement!

Most men are triflers on a larger scale than children and that is the main difference. Children, when they trifle, play with little thingstheir toys so breakableare they not made on purpose to be trifled with and broken? The child with his trifles is but doing as he should. Alas, I know men and women who trifle with their souls and with Heaven and Hell and eternity! They trifle with Gods Word, trifle with Gods Son, trifle with God Himself! Charge not children with being frivolous, for their little games often have as much of earnestness about them and are as useful as the pursuits of men! Half the councils of our senators and the debates of our Parliaments are worse than childs play! The game of war is a far greater folly than the most frolicsome of boyish tricks!

Big children are worse triflers than the little ones can ever be. Despise not children for trifling when the whole world is given to folly! Yes, they say, but if we should let the children come to Christ and if He should bless them, they will soon forget it. No matter how loving his look and how spiritual his words, they will go back to their play and their weak memories will preserve no trace of it at all. This objection we meet in the same manner as the others. Do not men forget? What a forgetful generation do most preachers address! Verily, this is a generation like that of which

Isaiah said, Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.

Alas, many of our hearers must have the Gospel preached to them again and again and again till the preacher is well-near weary with his hopeless task! They are like men who see their natural faces in a glass and go their way to forget what manner of men they are. They still live in sin. The Word has no abiding place in their hearts. Forgetfulness? Charge not children with it lest the accusation is proven against yourselves! But do the little ones forget? I suppose the events which we best remember in advanced age are the things which happened to us in our earliest days. At any rate, I have shaken hands with gray-headed men who have forgotten nearly all the events which have intervened between their old age and the time of their childhoodbut little matters which transpired at home, hymns learned at their mothers knee and words spoken by their father or sister have lingered with them!

The voices of childhood echo throughout life. The first learned is generally the last forgotten. The young children who heard our Lords blessing would not forget it. They would have His countenance photographed upon their hearts and never forget His kind and tender smile. Peter, James and John and the rest of you are all mistaken and, therefore, you must suffer the children to come to Jesus! Perhaps, too, they thought that children had not sufficient capacity. Jesus Christ said such wonderful things that the children could not be supposed to have the capacity to receive them. Yet, indeed, this is a great error, for children readily enter into our Lords teaching. They never learn to read so quickly from any book as from the New Testament.

The words of Jesus are so childlike and so fitted for children that they drink them in better than the words of any other man, however simple he may try to be. Children readily understand the Child Jesus. What is this matter of capacity? What capacity is needed? Capacity to believe? I tell you children have more of that than grown-up persons. I am not now speaking of the spiritual part of faith, but as far as the mental faculty is concerned, there is any quantity of the capacity for faith in the heart of a child. His believing faculty has not yet been overloaded by superstition, or perverted by falsehood, or maimed by wicked unbelief. Only let the Holy Spirit consecrate the faculty and there is enough of it for the production of abundant faith in God!

In what respect are children deficient of capacity? Do they lack capacity for repentance? Assuredly not! Have I not seen a girl weep herself ill because she has done wrong? A tender conscience in many a little boy has made him unutterably miserable when he has been conscious of a fault. Do not some of us remember the keen arrows of conviction which rankled in our hearts when we were yet children? I distinctly remember the time when I could not rest because of sin and sought the Lord, while yet a child, with bitter anguish! Children are capable enough of repentance, God the Holy Spirit working it in them. This is not conjecture, for we, ourselves, are living witnesses.

What, then, do children need in the matter of capacity? Why, they have not sufficient understanding, says one. Understanding of what? If the religion of Jesus were that of modern thought; if it were such sublime nonsense that none but the so-called cultured class could make heads or tails of it, then children might be incapable of its comprehension. But if it is, indeed, the Gospel of the poor mans Bible, then there are shallows in it where the tiniest lamb in Jesus fold may wade without fear of being carried off its feet! It is true that in the Scriptures there are great mysteries where your leviathans may dive and find no bottombut the knowledge of these deep things is not essential to salvation, or else few of us would be saved!

The things that are essential to salvation are so exceedingly simple that no child need sit down in despair of understanding the things which make for his peace. Christ crucified is not a riddle for sages, but a plain Truth of God for plain people. True, it is meat for men, but it is also milk for babes! Did you say that children could not love? That, after all, is one of the grandest parts of the education of a Christiandid you dream that children could not attain to it? No, you did not say that, nor dared you think it, for the capacity for love is great in a child! Would God it were always as great in ourselves!

To put the thought of the Apostle into one or two wordsthey thought that the children must not come to Christ because they were not like themselvesthey were not men and women. A child not big enough, tall enough, grown enough, great enough to be blessed by Jesus? So they half thought! The child must not come to the Master because he is not like the man. How the blessed Savior turns the tables and says, Say not, the child may not come till he is like a man, but know that you cannot come till you are like he! It is no difficulty in the childs way that he is not like youthe difficulty is with youthat you are not like the child. Instead of the child needing to wait until he grows up and becomes a man, it is the man who must grow down and become like a child! Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall by no means enter it.

Our Lords words are a complete and all-sufficient answer to the thought of His disciples and we may, each one, as we read them, learn wisdom. Let us not say, Would to God my child were grown up like myself that he might come to Christ. No, but rather may we almost wish that we were little children again, could forget much that we now know, could be washed clean from habit and prejudice and could begin again with a childs freshness, simplicity and eagerness! As we pray for spiritual childhood, Scripture sets its seal upon the prayer, for it is written, Except a man be born again He cannot see the kingdom of God. And again, Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Thus much upon the secret thought of the disciples.

Now, I wonder whether any of you have such a thought as theirs lingering in your brain or heart this morning? I wonder whether you ever think in this fashion? I should not be surprised if you do. I hope it is not quite so common as it used to be, but I used to see, in certain quarters among old folks, a deep suspicion of youthful piety. The seniors shook their heads at the idea of receiving children into the Church of the living God. Some even ventured to speak of converts as only a lot of girls and boys as if they were the worse for that! Many, if they hear of a child-convert,

are very dubious, unless he dies very soon and then they believe all about him! If the child lives, they sharpen their axes to have a swing at him by way of examination. He must know all the doctrines, certainlyand he must be supernaturally grave!

It is not every grown-up person who knows the higher doctrines of the Word of God, but if the young person should not know them he is set aside. Some people expect almost Infinite Wisdom in a child before they can believe him to be the subject of Divine Grace. This is monstrous! Then, again, if a believing child should act like a child, some of the fathers of the last generation judged that he could not be converted, as if conversion to Christ added 20 years to our age! Of course, the young convert must not play any more, nor talk in his own childish fashion or the seniors would be shocked, for it was a sort of understood thing that as soon as ever a child was converted, he was to turn into an old man! I never could see anything in Scripture to support this theory, but then, Scripture was not so much cared for as the judgment of the deep-experienced people and the general opinion that it was well to summer and winter all converts before admitting them into the sacred enclosures of the Church.

Now, if any of you still have an idea in your head hostile to the conversion of children, try and get rid of it, for it is as wrong as wrong can be. If there were two enquirers before me nowa child and a manand I received from each the same testimony, I should have no more right to distrust the child than to suspect the man! In fact, if suspicions must come in anywhere, it ought rather to be exercised towards the adult than in reference to the child who is far less likely to be guilty of hypocrisy than the man and far less likely to have borrowed his words and phrases! At any rate, learn from the Masters words that you are not to try and make the child like yourself, but you are to be transformed till you yourself are like the child.

II. Now we pass on to our second head, namely, THE OPEN DECLARATION OF OUR LORD wherein He sets forth His mind upon this matter. Looking at it carefully, we observe, first, that He tells the disciples that the Gospel sets up a kingdom. Was there ever a kingdom which had no children in it? How, then, could it grow? Jesus tells us that children are admitted into the kingdom. No, not only that some few are here and there admitted into it, but, of such is the kingdom of God. I am not inclined to get away from the plain sense of that expression, nor to suggest that He merely means that the kingdom consists of those who are like children. It is clear that He intended such children as those who were before Him babies and young childrenof such is the kingdom of God.

There are children in all kingdoms and there are children in Christs kingdom. I am not certain that John Newton was not right when he said that the majority of persons who are now in the kingdom of God are children. When I think of all the multitudes of babies that have died, who are now swarming in the streets of Heaven, it does seem to me to be a blessed thought that albeit generation after generation of adults have passed away in unbelief and rebellion, yet enormous multitudes of children have gone streaming up to Heaven, saved by the Grace of God, through the death of Christ, to sing the high praises of the Lord forever before the Eternal Throne! Of such is the kingdom of Heaven. They give tone and character to the kingdom! It is rather a kingdom of children than of men.

Next, our Lord tells us that the way of entering the kingdom is by receiving. Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall by no means enter it. We do not enter into the kingdom of God by working out some deep problem and arriving at its solution or by fetching something out of ourselves, but by receiving a secret something into us. We come into the kingdom by the kingdoms coming into us. It receives us by our receiving it. Now, if this entrance into the kingdom depended upon something to be fetched out of the human mind by study and deep thought, then very few children could ever enter it! But it depends upon something to be received and, therefore, children may enter. Those children who are of sufficient years to sin and to be saved by faith, have to listen to the Gospel and to receive it by faithand they can do this, God the Holy Spirit helping them.

There is no doubt about it, because great numbers have done it. I will not say at what age children are first capable of receiving the knowledge of Christ, but it is much earlier than some fancy. We have seen and known children who have given abundant evidence that they have received Christ and have believed in Him at a very early age. Some of them have died triumphantly and others of them have lived graciouslyand some are here now, grown up to be men and women who are honorable members of the Church. Oh, Sirs, you who would wish to be considered cultured and thoughtful and, therefore, able to fetch a Gospel out of the deep well of your own consciousnessyou will never be saved by that process! It is not that which comes out of you which will save you, but that which goes into you! Inventions and discoveries will not enable you to enter the kingdom you must be receivers. You must sit at Jesus feet and believe what He reveals. You must let your artful questions and your curious suppositions lie still and you must become a scholarfor the proud spirit which scorns discipleship will shut you out of the kingdom of God unless you crucify it! We enter the kingdom by receiving and, therefore, children can enter!

The next thing in the text is that if we receive this kingdom and so enter into it, we must receive it as children receive it. How do children receive the kingdom of God? The answer must be twofold, seeing there are two sorts of childrenthose who are mere babies and incapable of actual sinand those who are quite capable both of sinning and believing. I shut out neither from the text because I honestly think they are both there. In one Gospel our version reads, infants, and in the one before us, little children. We know that infants enter the kingdom, for we are convinced that all of our race who die in infancy are included in the election of Grace and partake in the redemption worked out by our Lord Jesus. Whatever some may think, we believe that the whole spirit and tone of the Word of God, as well as the Nature of God, Himself, lead us to believe that all who leave this world as babies are saved.

Now, how do they receive the kingdom, for in the same way must we receive it! Certainly children do not receive it by birth or blood, for we are expressly told in Johns Gospel that the children of God are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh! All privilege of descent is now abolished

and no baby enters into Heaven because it was born of a pious father or motherneither shall any be shut out because his progenitors were atheists or idolaters! My solemn persuasion is that the child of a Muslim, or a Papist, or a Buddhist, or a cannibal dying in infancy is as surely saved as the child of the Christian! Salvation by blood or birth there can be none, for the Gospel dispensation does not admit of it. If saved, as we assuredly believe they are, infants must be saved simply according to the will and good pleasure of God because He has made them to be His own!

Neither are infants saved as the result of any ceremony. There is no mention in the passage of infant baptism and yet if there had been, such an ordinance as this appears to be a natural time for announcing it. Not so much as a word or a hint upon that practice can be found here and, therefore, I will not waste words upon a question quite foreign to my text. It is clear that our Lord is speaking of children, as such, and not as the subjects of a ceremony. Children dying in infancy in China and Japan are as truly saved as those dying in England or Scotland. Their need of (socalled) baptism cannot affect them one jot. Babes of swarthy mothers; infants born in the kraal of the Hottentot or the wigwam of the Red Indian are alike saved and, therefore, not saved by any outward rite, or by the mystic power of a priesthood. They are raised to the kingdom of Heaven by the Free and Sovereign Grace of God!

How are they saved then? By works? No, for they have never worked! By their natural innocence? No, for if that innocence could have admitted them to Heaven, it must also have sufficed to save them from pain and death. If sin is not upon them in some form, how is it that they suffer? The imputed sin which makes them die prevents our believing that they claim Heaven by right of innocence! They die because of Adams fall. Sad consequence of their being born of fallen parents. Mark their appealing looks as the dear little ones look up in their sufferings, as if they would ask why they must endure so much pain! We look at them with all the deeper grief because we cannot help them and are made to reflect upon the mysterious union of the race in its fall and sorrow.

The anguish of the dying little one is a proof of Adams fall and of its participation in the result. The dear babies live again, however, because Jesus died and rose again and they are in Him! They perish, as far as this life is concerned, for a sin which they did not commitbut they also live eternally through a righteousness in which they had no handeven the righteousness of Jesus Christ who has redeemed them! We know little of the matter, but we suppose them to undergo regeneration before they enter Heaven, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and to enter the spiritual world they must be born of the Spirit. But whatever is worked in them, it is clear that they do not enter the kingdom by the force of intellect, or will, or meritbut as a matter of Free Gracehaving no reference to anything that they have done or have felt!

In that same manner you, O man or woman, must pass into the kingdom, entirely through Free Grace and not at all by any power or merit of your own! You will enter Heaven as fully by Grace as if you had never lived a godly life, nor had practiced a single virtue. I said, the other evening, to an esteemed member of this Church who lies dying, Dear Brother, you have been a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He replied, You say so, but I think nothing of what I have done. I am looking to Christ, alone. Just so. That is the ground of salvation! There cannot be any reason for the salvation of that dear baby which has just passed the portals of the skiesit was born of a fallen raceexcept the Grace of God! And that Grace of God which saves the baby must save you and me. I have nothing else to rest upon but the babys Savior and no hope except the belief that the Headship of Christ comprehends me within itself, even as it comprehends the little one.

Now we have to think of another sort of childrenthose who outlive the time of infancy and become children capable of actual sin and of knowing Christ and being converted. Many of these, by faith, enter the kingdom. Now, as these children receive the kingdom of Heaven, so must we receive it. How do the children receive it? I answer, a child receives the Gospel with humility, with simple faith and with unworldliness. Children are not held up to us as an example in all things, for they have faults which we ought to avoid. But they are here praised in this pointthe way in which they receive the kingdom. How does a child receive it? We have said first, with humility. He is humble enough to be without prejudice. Take a little child and tell him about Christ Jesus the Savior and if God blesses the telling of the story of the Cross and he believes it, he receives it without having any wrong views and notions to battle with.

Many a man goes to hear the Gospel with the idea that Christ is merely human. He cannot get rid of that prejudice from his mind and, therefore, he does not receive Christ Jesus the Lord. Another comes to hear the Word with the recollection of all that he has heard and read of infidelity, heresy and profanityhow can he profit till this is removed? Another comes with his mind stuffed with proud self-righteousness, with a belief in priestcraft, or with a reliance upon some form or ceremony. If we could get this lumber out of the soul there would be some hopebut all this is a hindrance. Now the dear child, as he listens to the story of the love of God in Christ Jesus, has none of these prejudices to spoil his hearing! Very likely He does not even know that such evils have been invented by man and he is blessed in his ignorance. He will find out the evil soon enough, but for the present he humbly drinks in the Word, and prays

*Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,   
Look on me, a little child;   
Pity my simplicity;   
Suffer me to come to Thee.*

Now, this deliverance from preconceived notions is what we greatly need! My highly cultured and learned hearer over yonder, you must come to Jesus as if you knew nothing! You must begin de novo, with a clean page, on which Jesus must write what you are to believe. Just as your little boy or your little girl must believe, even so must you. There is only ONE way for the shepherd and the sage, the philosopher and the peasant. The little child receives Christ humbly, for he never dreams of merit or purchase. I do not recollect ever having met with a child who had to battle with self-righteousness in coming to Christ. A child cannot say, Lord, I have been a constant attendant at Church or at the Meeting House for

years. I have taken the sacrament regularly for half-a-century! Neither can he say with the Pharisee, I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.

Now, when a little one believes in the Lord Jesus, it is always with a heart clear of boasting and with a soul which sings   
*In my hand no price I bring,   
Simply to Your Cross I cling.*

That is how you will have to come to Jesus, my fine grown-up! You must doff those feathers of pride and strip off that finery of self-righteousness or you will find Heavens gate too low and too narrow for you! A little child is free from the pride of knowledgeit has no culture and research to heap up before the Cross. Certain men will not come to Jesus because they know too much. Their self-conceit will be their ruin. They have read and they have thought and they have studied and, therefore, they know better than Inspiration, better than Apostles and Prophets! But my big brother, you must be diminished and brought down from the chair of the critic to the stool of the scholar if ever you are to be saved. Saving truth enters the heartit is not developed from withinand it will have to come into you as it comes into the child, simply by believing what Jesus says, or else you will be a castaway. There is no other way of your entering into the kingdom of God but by the door which admits a child!

A second point about a little child is that it is generally teachable. You do not find your children in the Sunday school, when the Lord blesses them, raising difficulties. They do not enquire how is the good news from Heaven consistent with reason? And how is this statement of Scripture to be reconciled with the spirit of the age? No, there is the bread of Heaven before the child and he eats it, though he does not yet know how the wheat was made into bread. That is how we must receive the kingdom we must lay aside all hope of solving difficulties and simply believe upon the authority of God. Nothing short of this is faith! Children receive the Gospel without proposing amendments in it. I should like your Gospel, says one, if you would alter it here and amend it there. There is a clique abroad nowadays who are always for unsettling our faith in the old Truth of God, but a child receiving the Gospel knows nothing of such designs he takes it from the Word of God just as he sees it there. In the same manner must we receive the kingdom of Heaven.

A child receives it, too, with a wondering realization of it. When you tell a believing child the promises of the Word of God, how he opens his little eyes! How fully he believes the Word of God! How ready he is to ask for the blessing and to receive it and act upon it! It is, to him, a matter of undoubted fact! I have seen people who profess to be Christians smiling at the matter-of-fact way in which a child has believed the Word of Godand yet we ought to believe it in the same wayand we shall never enter into the enjoyment of it till we do! In the childs simple, honest, hearty way, we must believe the Word to mean what it says and to be a reality and a truthand only then shall we know the marrow and fatness of the Gospel!

Once again, the child receives the Gospel in an unworldly manner. He has not to think of how he shall meet those heavy bills tomorrow, nor even of how he shall provide for his daily bread. He has not much to think of at all except that which he is taught. It is a grand thing to give all ones mind to the teaching of Jesus, for then we are sure to learn! It is beautiful to see how contented children are. A child of a poor man is just as happy as a young princewith a few bits of platter to play with, he is just as much at ease as if he could handle diamonds and rubies. The child has no ambition for great things. Why should boys and girls care for stars? They are satisfied with their lotthey crave not for thrones and kingdoms! Give them enough dirt to make a pie and they will be as merry as the birds in spring and much more satisfied than a millionaire if he could obtain sole possession of the Bank of England! In this respect children have an advantage over us because when they receive the kingdom of God they are not already full with the thoughts of the world and the cares of riches.

If you notice, our Savior has placed this incident just before that of the rich young man who went away sorrowful, as much as if He would set before us the man with his possessions who loses the kingdom in contrast with the child with noneand thinking about nonewho receives the kingdom! Oh that you who are unsaved would let your business alone awhile and give your whole minds to seeking Christ! He is your main need! Oh that you would forget your worldly concerns a little and go into your chamber and cry, Great God, I will seek after nothing else but You until I find You. I must have Christ or die! Lord, I cast all else aside and resolve to wait upon You till I am washed from sin and admitted into Your kingdom.

Now, I think I hear someone murmur, If this is true, what is the use of the exercise of private judgment? The highest result of the exercise of judgment is that you resolve to sit at Jesus feet! You do not resign yourself to any pope, preacher, or human leaderbut since Jesus is God, you feel quite safe in accepting His Infallible Word as your guide and, like a child, you sit at His feet! Well, asks another, but what is the use of our obtaining learning and knowledge? Here is one of the uses of itit is not your learned man who rejects Christit is your man who has a smattering of learning and boasts of it! He that has an honest heart and is deeply learned always feels it sweet to be a child in the Presence of his God. The most gigantic minds in the world are the most childlike. Learn as much as ever you can and investigate as far as ever you please! But if God sanctifies your learning, it will help to make you more childlike so that you will all the more readily learn of Jesus!

But then, what is the use of experience? This is the best use of experience! What little I have ever had of experience has taught me that I cannot trust myself at all. It has taught me that I can neither think a good thought nor do a right act apart from my Master! My experience teaches me to be sure of nothing unless I have it from my Lords mouth and I think the more experience any man obtains the more will he be of that mind. Still, says one, surely we must advance in capacity and in attainments and become men? I admit that very freely, but when in knowledge you are men, then in teachableness you will be quite sure to be children, for the greater a man becomes in the kingdom of God, the more a

child he becomes! Yes, the greatest among us, who sat as high above us as the heavens are above the earth, is One who was called, The Holy Child Jesus. When we see Him sitting in the midst of children who cluster all round Him while He clasps one and another to His bosom, we perceive that He is wonderfully much at home! We see He is just a holy, tender, lovely Man-Child, Himself, loving and being loved! Let us try to be such!

Do you not all love a man who is childlike in the frankness and loveableness of his nature? Do you not all wish that you could grow into children in simplicity and live a childs life in freedom from care? That is the use of increased capacity, that you may be more capable of being childrenthat you may have more capacity to receive the Truth from God because you are more conscious of your ignorance and emptiness. He is the best receiver who feels himself to be thoroughly empty and is, at the same time, as willing to be taught as a little child.

III. My time has gone before I noticed it and I must only say two or three words upon the last head, namely, THE GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT given by our Lord in the text. I cannot expatiate, but I pray you consider it, each one for himself. First, to all parents and teachers. Let us rejoice in the conviction that our children may be brought to Christ and let us labor earnestly to bring them, however little they may be! I hope we prayed about them while they yet knew nothing of our prayers and I hope we shall continue to pray for them till we see them safe in the arms of Jesus.

Next, what an encouragement this is to children! I am always glad to see the little ones so desirous to come to the Tabernacle service. I hope they can understand a good deal of what is said. Yes, I am sure they do, for I see their beaming faces! Dear little children, come to Jesus! Do not wait till you grow up, but seek the Lord early, for His promise is, They that seek Me early shall find Me. And then what encouragement this is to all who are childlike! You feel that you do not know much; you mourn your lack of capacity for grasping the lofty Truths of the Word. You feel willing to be anything or nothing so that you may but be savedsurely the reception of the children will encourage you in the belief that Jesus will accept you!

And last of all, to my mind it is a sweet comfort concerning our race over which we have such cause to mourn. After all, when we think of infants being saved and of the Lord saying, Of such is the kingdom of Heaven, we shall hope that out of all kindreds, nations and tongues there will be a number that no man can number in whom Christ shall see of the travail of His soul! Millions of infant souls compose the family above! If you have lost infants, you will rejoice when you remember that you will go to them though they will not return to you!

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THE SOULS CRISIS   
NO. 906

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
Jesus of Nazareth passes by.   
Luke 18:37.

Such was the news of that day. As an exclamation, doubtless it was often repeated when our Lord made His journeys through the land of Palestine and its outskirtsJesus of Nazareth passes by! How quickly would the inhabitants of their cities and their villages be astir when the news reached them! What a curiosity there would be to see Him, knowing that His fame was spoken of everywhere! What an eagerness among the multitudes to get close enough to hear Him! What an intense anxiety on the part of some to go, themselves, and of others to take their sick and diseased friends that they might obtain health and cure! Oh, I think there was enough in those words to make men forego, awhile, their farms and their merchandise, their labors and their pleasures that they might feast their eyes and ears with the sight of His face and the sound of His voice or much more, that they might obtain some grateful relief and get some substantial benefit from Him who went about doing good!

But, my dear Brothers and Sisters, I want you to catch the spiritual significance of these thrilling words. Did you understand them aright, you would rise up and shake off your lethargy! You would be eager to greet His Presence and anxious to learn His doctrine! That, however, which I am sure would stir you to the hearts core and excite all your passions is the vehement desire to have salvation, present salvation, from Him! Surely you would be ready to receive Him into your house, to welcome Him to your heart and to sit at His feet dissolved in wonder, love and praise! And yet full many of you who join the throng and mingle with the families that come up to seek the Lord are as unconcerned for yourselves as though your sins were of no concern and your souls in no immediate peril!

Oh, it is high time that some here present were saved! In a short time you must be in another world. Hard by that column, on my right, in yonder gallery, in that next pew, there have usually sat two attentive hearers, husband and wife, who early this morning were suffocated by the smoke of their own burning house! I little thought that they would be preachers to us tonightbut they are so. The calamity, sudden and mysterious, which has removed them from our midst, sets the uncertainly of life, and the preparation for departure so vividly before us that we cannot refrain our emotions or restrain our sympathies.

Their absence should speak loudly to those who occupy the seat they have vacated, asking them whether they are ready to depart. Not less loudly should it speak to all sitting here, raising the question in the hearts of some of you who are careless about your souls, how you could bear to pass out of this world if the arrow of death should overtake you unawares. A trifling accident may prove fatal! A slight illness may be the precursor of speedy dissolution! Can you imagine your own remorse as you glance backwards at the Gospel you have listened to but never embracedthe blood of sprinkling you have heard of, but have never been applied to your consciencethe Savior whom you passed by with indifference when He passed by you, ready to be gracious and you would not be His disciple? Ah, you may turn from such questions with a faint smile nowbefore long you will turn to them with a pale shudder!

Are there any here present anxious to be saved? Let me have their solemn, earnest and devout attention! I pray God that what I speak simply may just strike their consciences and touch their hearts. If they want their judgments informed, may the Word come with light to their spirits and in that light may they behold Christ and find salvation! Our text is taken from a little narrative of a blind man who sat by the side of the highway beggingnot an inappropriate picture of you, my Friends, who are solicitous of mercy and anxiously desirous of salvation. Are you not as blind and poor spiritually as he was literally?

I am sure that you will at once confess that you are blind. The eyes of your understanding are dim. Your heart is wrapped in darkness. You cannot see what you want to see. You do not even see your sin so as to repent of it with contrition. You have not yet seen the power of the precious blood of Jesus so as to believe in it as worshippers once purged and abundantly conscious that it has procured their remission. While you are so blind, I am quite sure that you will not be grieved or vexed with me if I say, too, that you are as poor as Bartimaeus. His was poverty of pence, but yours is poverty of soul. You have no merit! You have no strength. You have no possibility of ever getting the means of spiritual livelihood for yourselves. You are as poor as the poorest beggar that ever asked a charity for Gods sake from the wayfarers!

But you are sitting tonight in somewhat the same position as that blind man was, for he sat in the place of Jesus passing by and you have come to the place where Gods mercy has often been revealedwhere saints and sinners have passed by in crowds and where, blessed be His name! Jesus Himself sometimes has passed by! What if tonight you should be apprised and aware of His Presence here and should cry out to Him and He should stop and open those blind eyes of yours and give you the light of life and the joy of eternal salvation? What if you should have to go home and say to your friends and kinsfolk, I have had an experience tonight the like of which I never felt before! I have found a Savior! I have received the forgiveness of my sins! I am a new creature in Christ Jesus!?

Why you would make angels sing fresh hallelujahs in Heaven, while on earth God would be glorified and yourselves and your friends would be blessed by so lively an exercise of faith and so wonderful a participation of Divine Grace!

I. Now, looking steadfastly that this may be the case, I wish to speak very pointedly to you about two or three things. First, when Jesus passed by the blind man it was to that man A DAY OF HOPE. He had given up all thought of ever being able to see, so long had his eyes been closed to the light. When Jesus passed by the case was different. He could perform any miraclethere was no limit to His healing powerwhy shouldnt He open a blind mans eyes? And you, my anxious Friend, you have felt that you could not be saved. Of course, if it depended upon yourself you could not by any duties you discharged, or any services you performed acquire merit enough to enter Heavenor even to procure the forgiveness of your sins on earth.

But, if Jesus Christ has come into the world to save that which was lost, it is a totally different matter! He can certainly pardon the greatest offenders and He can deliver from going down into the Pit the most undeserving of rebels. It was an hour of hope to that blind man and if Jesus passes by now, this is an hour of hope to you! But, does He pass by? I answerYes! There are different respects in which this may be interpreted of our Lords conduct. In a certain sense He has been passing by some of you ever since you began to discern right from wrong. You have, some of you, been nurtured and bred up under the hearing of the Gospel and you cannot remember the time when you did not know something, at any rate, of the facts and Truths of God that pertain to Christianity.

Well, all this while Jesus Christ has been slowly passing by you halting, pausing, giving you spaceif perhaps you would call to Him for mercy. O take heed, that passing by may soon be over! The candle of life may be blown out. Yet while the Gospel rings in your ears, it is a day of hope to youlet not Satan or your own despairing heart persuade you to the contrary. More especially is it a time of Christs passing by when the Gospel is preached with power. If this evening the Gospel should so come to you as to win your attention and melt your heartif you should feel a Divine influence exerted over you by itthe evidence will not be lacking that Jesus is passing by.

Or, if the Gospel, though it affects not you, should convey such an influence and bring forth such fruits in others who are sitting in the same pew with you, that they should be saveddepend upon itthe kingdom of God will have come near unto you! It will then have passed by and you will have received no blessing because you sought it not in faith. Yet responsibilities will have come upon you from which you will not be able to escape! Jesus will have passed by other blind men and they will have asked for sight and had it, while you will remain blindnot because Jesus cannot heal youbut because you have not asked His healing, but have continued still in your unbelief of Him. I feel conscious within myself that this very night Jesus is, in a special manner, present in this assembly.

Sometimes the preacher has yearnings within himself for the people as if he travailed in birth until Christ is formed in them. He wrestles with such an earnest longing after souls as if their peril and the conflict for their rescue were all his ownthat is no slight omen of the coming blessing. He perceives, also, the same desire in many of his converted hearers. As he knows that they are praying God with much vehemence of spirit to bring in the sinner, the atmosphere of prayer becomes to him an indication of the time and the place where Jesus manifests Himself, for where His people pray, Christ is surely present! I encourage you then, dear Hearers, with hopeful signs of heavenly Grace!

This is a hopeful hour! If you have lived up till now unsaved, I indulge the fervent hope that the hour has now come when you shall find salvation! Though you may, up to now, have sought and sought and sought in vain, yet now, surely, the set time to favor you has come! Lord, grant it may be so, that it may be so to many and we will bless Your name!

II. Secondly, as it was a time of hope to that poor blind man, so was it especially a TIME OF ACTIVITY. You that anxiously desire salvation regard attentively these words. A man cannot be saved by what he does salvation is in Christyet no man is saved except as he seeks earnestly after Christ! This blind man did not open his eyes himself. What he did, did not help or contribute in any degree to his attaining sight. Nevertheless, he had to seek Jesus to have his eyes opened. There was enough in this to kindle all his passions, summon all his faculties and engage all his energies. But most certainly there was nothing in it to exercise his skill in discovering or applying a remedynothing to win him any honornothing to entitle him to any reward.

Yet this man is a picture of what we should be if we desire to be saved. He listened attentively. He could not see, but he had ears. He could catch the sound of footsteps. The silence that was broken by crowds coming along the road to Jericho was peculiar. The tramp was of an unusual sort and the tone of voices far different from those of wrangling or of revelry, or the songs of common travelers. He listened, yes, he listened with all his ears. So, dear Hearers, whenever the Gospel is preached, do not give it merely such a hearing as you might give to an ordinary story that is told you. But oh, hear it as Gods Word! Hear it with bated breath and profound reverence! Drink it in as the parched earth drinks in the shower! Hear it fearing to miss a single word, lest that should be the word that might have blessed you!

I believe attentive hearers are the most likely people to get the blessing. Let none of us, therefore, when we go to the courts of the Lords House and hear a Gospel sermon, suffer our thoughts to be wandering here and there, but let us give scrupulous heed so we may detect the footsteps of the Lord by the conversation of His disciples. But, this man, after he had heard with discrimination, enquired with eagerness what it meant. Oh, how I wish our hearers would begin to ask, What does it mean? I can say that I put my words as plainly as I can. Oftentimes when there is a bunch of gaudy flowers of rhetoric that I gladly would use and could use, I have thrown them all on the dunghill because they might have stood in some poor sinners way and he might not have understood the plain Truth of God so well.

Ah, but still, for all that, talk as we may, the carnal mind understands not the things that are of God! It is a blessed sign when men begin to say, What is it all about? What is the drift of this Gospel? What does the man mean by sin and its heinousness? What does he mean by Christ and His precious blood? What is it all about? O dear Hearers, some of you only skim your Bibles when you read them! I wish you would stop and ponder and ask of Christian people who have experienced these things, What do these texts mean? So, too, if there is anything in a sermon that baffles you, I wish you would seek out some godly and instructed Christian and say, Explain to me what this thing means? I should have great hopes of you if you were thus enquiring after the plan of salvation.

Is it not worth your while to ask the question, Sirs? When a man has lost his way, he will ask 20 people sooner than he will continue to pursue a wrong course. And will you lose your way to Heaven through not asking old travelers to direct you? Do, I pray you, be in earnest to learn and it shall not be long before God shall teach you, for whenever He makes a man conscious of his ignorance and anxious to be taught, God the Holy Spirit is quite sure to instruct him before long. When this man had asked the question and had been told in reply that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, notice what he did nexthe began to pray.

We are told that he cried. His cry was a prayer and his prayer was a cry. It took the form of a piteous and emphatic outburst of desireYou Son of David, have mercy on me. It was a short prayer. He did not need a book. Being a blind man he could not have used one if he had had it. Blessed be God, we need no Book of Prayers. We need such prayers as blind men can use quite as readily as those who can see. And what a comprehensive prayer it wasHave mercy on me! Have mercy on me! It was not the words of the prayerit was the true desire and the believing confidence of the prayer that did the work. You Son of David, have mercy upon me!

Now, my dear Hearer, you tell me that you wish to be saved, that you are anxious, no, enquiringbut do you pray? How can you expect mercy if it is not thought by you to be worth the asking for? What? Will you have God give you it without your seeking it? He has done so sometimes, but the usual rule of Divine Grace, and the most proper rule is that you should humbly ask for mercy at His feet. Will you do it? What? Is Hell so paltry a doom that you will not pray to escape from it? What? Is Heaven so trifling a destination that you will not pray that you may gain it? O Sirs, when heavenly mercy is to be had for the asking, will you not invoke the Almighty and be obedient to the Redeemer to obtain it? Then how richly you deserve to die! Being placed on pleading terms, you will not plead! And being bid to seek the Lord while He may be found, you willfully refuse to seek Him!

Yes, richly do you deserve to perish in your sin! But it must not be so with you. I cannot look you in the face and think you will do such despite to Gods claims and your own interests. No, you will pray, I trust you will. You will cry with your whole heart to God! Be assured that never did a man really cry for mercy and continue to do so with his whole heart, but sooner or later mercy came! There are no praying souls in Hell! God never damns those who are suppliants for mercy. If you do but lay hold on the Cross of Christ and say, I will not let this go except I get the blessing! I will not cease until I win my souls desire, you shall soon have the mercy that you seek! O that God would stir you up to pray!

As this man prayed, there were some standing by who said, Hush! Hold your tongue! You disturb the preaching. We cannot hear the silvery tones of the orator. Be still. It is not right for a beggar like you, crawling in the street, to disturb respectable people by your harsh, croaking voicebe quiet! But his heart, being thus moved, there was no silence for his tongue! So much the more, with increasing vehemence and force, he iterated and reiterated the prayer, You Son of David, you Son of David, have mercy on me! Have mercy on me!

Now, if you desire salvation and have begun to pray, Satan will say, Ah, it is of no use! Be quiet! The flesh will say, Why do you do this? There is time enough. Procrastination will come in and say, When you grow old it will be time enough, then, to begin to seek the Lord. A thousand difficulties will be suggested, but, O Soul, if you are, indeed, set upon salvation and God has made you in earnest, you will say to all these, Stand back! I cannot and will not be silenced by you! I must have mercy! It is mercy I need and it is mercy I must have, or I perish forever and that I cannot afford! Therefore I will cry the more!   
I wishbut ah, it is not in my powerstill, I do wish that I could persuade you to importunate prayer. May the Holy Spirit lead you to pray. Well do I recollect my own prayers when I was seeking Christ. I prayed for months and sometimes in the chamber where I sought the Lord, I felt as if I could not come away from the Mercy Seat till I had an answer of peace but I waited long before I got it. Still, it came at last and oh, it is worth waiting for! If one had to plead for mercy by the 20 years at a time, yet if at last the silver scepter were stretched out it would well repay all the groans and the tears of the most anxious spirits! Get to your chambers, then, or if you cannot get to your chambers, get to a saw pit, a hayloftit matters not whereand pour out your heart before Him and do not rise from your knees until the Lord has said, Your sins, which are many, are forgiven you!

After this man had thus pleaded, it is noteworthy that Jesus stood still and called him. I must call your attention to this matter. As soon as Jesus had called the blind man, the effect produced on him is startling. I think I see him sitting there by the wayside helpless. Jesus bids him come. He gets up and in a moment he throws off that outer garment which had been so precious to himin which he had so often wrapped himself up in cold nightswhen he had to sleep beneath the open sky. That much prized, though all patched and filthy garmenthe threw it right away! It might have made him a minute or two slower, so off he threw it and away he ran to Jesus!

Ah, and it is a great mercy when a poor soul feels that it can throw away anything and everything to get to Christ! Oh, says the sinner who really seeks a Savior, if there is any sin that I indulged that prevents my finding mercy, only let me know it and I will do away with it. Is there any habit I have which I do not even know to be sin, or a thing I do that gives me pleasure, but is objectionable in the sight of God, I will do away with it! O Lord, if I must be poor, or if I must be sick, I will do away with my health and away with my wealth if I may but find mercy

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

I charge you, seekers of Jesus, let nothing stand between you and Christ! You must have salvation! You cannot afford to do without it. O fling away, then, everything that might impede you. Cast off the garment that might trip you up in the heavenly race. Lay aside every weight and the sin that does most easily beset you and press to Jesus at once. Tonight, I pray you, press to Jesus with vehement speed and be not content till you get the blessing!

Once more. When this man had come to Jesus and Jesus said to him, What will you that I should do unto you? the man returned a straightforward and intelligent answer, Lord, that I might receive my sight. Now, when you are at prayer tonight, any of you, do not merely pray a general prayer, but put it before the Lord in plain language. I could suppose, for example, the tenor of your confession and petition might be something like thisLord, here I am. I have lived all this time without regard of You. I have been a hearer at the Tabernacle. Sometimes I have been so deeply impressed that I have shed many tears, but Lord, it has all come to nothing. Sermons upon sermons have I heard, yet sermon after sermon has been lost upon me. I am afraid I am a Gospel-hardened sinner.

I think, Lord, that sitting as I do right opposite the preacher, he speaking so pointedly as he does to me, witnessing, as I do, how others have been saved while I have been left unsaved, my heart must be like the nether millstone. Yet, Lord, You can save me. O have mercy on me! O melt this heart of stone! Break this adamant! Thaw this rock of ice! Lord, I know what it is that hinders methere is that cherished sin. There is that vile companion. There is that lust of the flesh. O God, enable me to give it up! Now help me to pluck off the right arm and tear out the right eye, for, oh, I cannot perish! I cannot perish! I cannot bear Your wrath in the world to come! I am afraid because of it! Therefore would I flee from it and find refuge in Jesus!

Or perhaps your case may be quite a different one and in pleading with God you may have to say, Lord, I never was a keeper of Your Sabbath. I have been on all those holy days spending the time in sinful pleasure and I do not know that I have any regard for You, but I fell into the crowd at the Tabernacle gates just now and got into the aisle and, Lord, Your Word has found me out and I feel as I never felt before! I do desire to be reconciled to You. Oh, you do not know how glad your heavenly Father will be to hear that, for, just as in the parable, the father ran and fell upon the prodigals neck and kissed him, so will our Father who is in Heaven run and fall upon your guilty neck and give you the kiss of pardon and of acceptance! And you, even you, shall be saved!

Glory be to God, there is none that will press and seek and knock and strive thus, but the mercy shall come unto them! Still, I cannot withhold one other remark. That which really brought salvation to this blind man was his faith, for Christ says, Your faith has saved you. Now here is the greatest point of allfaith! Faithfor work without faith is of little worth. Faith is the great saving Graceit is the real life-germ. What is faith? you ask. Anxious Enquirer, if you would know what faith is, understand that the other words for it are trust and belief. The faith that saves is a belief that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered an atonement for sin, and then, after a firm conviction, a simple trusting in that Atonement for your salvation.

Can you, this nightoh, I pray the Holy Spirit enables you!can you, this night, trust Jesus Christ? When I ask that question of an awakened sinner, it seems to me as if the answer should always be, Can I trust Him? Yes, indeed! Such a Savior, so Divine, offering such a sacrifice as the death of Himself, surely I can trust Him! Here is a nail upon which you may well hang all the weight of the vessel! Here is a bridge over which tens of thousands of the heaviest sinners may safely cross! Come then, Sinner, what do you say? Are you resolved to trust Jesus? If so, your faith has saved you already! Go and wrestle in prayer till you get you an assurance of it.

III. Time flies and I must not tarry. Let me have a solemn word upon another point. When Jesus passed by, it was, as we have said, to the blind man an hour of hope and it was an hour for bestirring himself. Now we notice, thirdly, it was AN HOUR OF CRISIS. Did I not observe just now that while life lasts Jesus is passing by? That is true in one sense, but I do also believe that in many cases the hour in which they will ever be able to find mercy is past long before men die. There was a man who had listened to an earnest Gospel exhortation and as he listened he felt that the preacher was speaking out his inmost heart to him. He thought within himself, That is an important matter.

As he listened the importance of the matter seemed to strike him more and more. His tears began to flow and he resolved that when he reached his home that night he would seek the Lord. As he went on his way, a companion met him and said, Come with me, and he invited him to a certain ale-house. He was revolted at the thought for the moment. He stood still and the deliberation seemed to go on in his soulWhich shall it be? Shall it be my jovial companion, or shall it be that earnest prayer on which I have resolved? He hesitated a moment and his better self, or rather the Holy Spirit within him, conquered, and that night as he knelt, Divine light shone into his soul and he became a Christian!

On that same occasion there was another man who passed through precisely the same experience and to whom the same temptation came. But he yielded to it and he was never after that troubled with such another difficulty. He listened again to sermons, but he never felt, under them, as he did under that. They lost all interest for him. After a time he left off attending the means of Grace and he is at this time a blasphemer, though before he seemed to stand upon the very borders of salvation! Probably to this last man there will never come a day of Grace again. He has now put himself beyond the reach of it, as to the meansfor he attends no place of worship and gives no heed to anything of the kind. Religion has become a thing for him to laugh at and its preachers the objects of his scorn.

Here were the turning points of these two livesDivine Grace decided the one and the flesh decided the otherthe one, in all human probability, is bound for Heaven and the other, alas, is bound for Hell. Such a night as this may have come now. I do not know that young man, nor where he sits tonight, but he is here. He has, after this service is over, an engagement of a sort that if his sainted mother in the country could but know of it, it would make her very hair stand on end with horror to think that her son should have come to that. I charge him by the living God to give up that sin, or else this night he may seal his own damnation!

There sits here in this house a woman who will, this evening, if the Lord shall make her fulfill the purpose of her heart, seek Christ and find Him. But if the temptation that is now striving with her should overcome her and the evening should be spent, after all, in idle chat, her conscience shall be seared as with a hot iron and from this hour it shall not be possible for the shafts of the Gospel to come at her. O that God may decide your case rightly for you, helping your will, your stubborn and wicked will, to yield and bow to the blessed instigation of His Holy Spirit in your hearts, for I am persuaded that this is an hour of crisis to many here!

IV. Lastly, remember that this hour of Jesus passing by is AN HOUR THAT WILL SOON BE GONE. Did you notice that word, Jesus of Nazareth passes by? He is not stopping, He is passing by, for He is going on towards the walls of Jericho to pass through its gates. Blind man, it is now or never, for He is passing by! He has come up to where you are! Cry to Him now! He has passed you, but cry to Him. Now, Man, He is long past, but He can yet hear you. Cry to Him now!

Ah, but He is passed and is gone and the man has not cried and now there is no other who can open his eyes, neither will this Son of David, for He has passed by and been unasked, unsought to bless. You had Christ passing by when you were young. I would to God you had said to Him then, Have mercy on me! But you waited till He came up to you in middle life and yet you did not seek Him. Alas, alas, for that! And now the gray hairs are stealing over you and half-a-century of unbelief has hardened your heart. You are getting close to 60 years of ungodliness, but He is not out of ear-shot yet. He will hear you now. O cry to Him, I pray you cry and may Gods Holy Spirit, who is the Author of all true supplication, breathe in you, now, a cry that never shall be stopped until you get the answer, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

Now, it may be that some here to whom I am speaking think that this preaching is all childs play and that our talking about these solemn things is very easy. I protest before God this night that I feel it to be stern hard work! Not but what it is easy and delightful to preach the Gospel, but I yearn over the souls of some of you! I cannot understand why you crowd here and when I know that there are perhaps half as many outside as inside, clamoring for entrance, I know not why it is. I do nothing to attract you here, but speak right out my Masters Gospel. The truth is, if the Lord inclines your hearts and brings you within the sound of the Gospel which I am eager to proclaim, I feel a responsibility about you which it were not possible for you to estimate.

What if you should, in the Day of Judgment, be able to say, We crowded to that house and we listened to that man, but he did not tell us the Truth of God, or he told it to us so coldly that we thought it did not matter and we put it off? Oh, if you are lost, yet bear me witness that I would gladly have you saved! And if persuasions could bring you to Christ, you should not perish for lack of them. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. This is the message, but if you reject it, a weight falls on my spiritit seems to crush me like a millstonethe thought that you should be lost! For what is it to be lost? To be cast away from the Presence of God! To be cast into Hell! To have to suffer, and that forever, all that the Justice of God can demandall that the Omnipotence of God can inflict!

Why, Sirs, if I have but a headache, or a toothache for one brief hour, my patience can scarcely endure the torture! What must it be to suffer such pains for a century? Man, I cannot guess what it must be! What must it be to have ten thousand times worse pains than these, forever and ever? Why, to be dejected in mind, to be despairing, to be disconsolate how bewildered it makes men! They take the knife or the poison in a fit of insanityit may be they cannot bear their lives because of their anguish and desperation. But all the pangs and racks and abandonment from which men suffer here are nothing to be compared with the woes and mental anguish of the world to come! Oh, the agony of a spirit doomed, forlorn, accursed, upon which God shall put His foot in awful wrath and lift it up no more forever!

And there, as you lie, tormented to the quick, you will have this to be your miserable portionI heard the Gospel, but I would not heed it. Christ was put before me, but I would not acknowledge Him. I was entreated to believe in His name and fly to Him for salvation, but I hesitatedhung in suspense, objectedand at length denied Him. And all for what? For a little drink, a little dance, a little sin that yielded me but slight pleasureor for worldly gain, or for low and groveling vicesor for sheer carelessness and gaiety! Lost, lost, lost! And for nothing! A sinner damned!

He lost his soul, but he did not gain the world. He gained only a little frivolous pleasure, even that poor pittance he spent in an hour and then he was forever cast away! May it not be so with younot with one of you, old or young! But may the Lord have mercy upon the whole assembly, for His dear names sake. Amen.

*There is a time, we know not when, A point we know not where,   
That marks the destiny of men,   
To glory or despair.   
There is a line, by us unseen,   
That crosses every path   
The hidden boundary between   
Gods patience and His wrath.   
To pass that limit is to die,   
To die, as if by stealth.   
It does not quench the beaming eye, Or pale the glow of health.   
The conscience may be still at ease, The spirits light and gay.   
That which is pleasing still may please, And care be thrust away.   
But on that forehead   
God has set   
Indelibly a mark,   
Unseen by manfor man as yet   
Is blind and in the dark.   
And yet the doomed mans path below, Like Eden, may have bloomed.   
He did not, does not, will not know, Or feel that he is doomed.   
He knows, he feels, that all is well, And every fear is calmed.   
He lives, he dies, he wakes in Hell, Not only doomed but damned!   
O where is your mysterious brook, By which our path is crossed,   
Beyond which God Himself has sworn, That he who goes is lost?   
How far may we go on in sin?   
How long will God forbear?   
Where does hope end? And where begin The confines of despair?   
An answer from the skies is sent You that from God depart,   
While it is called today,   
Repent! And harden not your heart.*

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 18.*** Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2755 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MUST HE?   
NO. 2755

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 1, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 27, 1879.

**And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must stay at your house.   
Luke 19:5.**

I THINK this is the only instance in which our Lord invited Himself to anybodys house. He often went when He was invited, but this time, if I may use the expression, He did the inviting Himself! Usually we must seek the Lord if we want to find Him. To the eye, at any rate, the apparent work of Grace goes on in this waya man begins to cry for mercy, as the blind man who heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, cried to Him, You Son of David, have mercy on me. But God is so rich in Grace that He does not restrict Himself to this usual method! Generally, He is found of them that seek Him, but, sometimes, He is found of them that seek Him not. Yes, if I tell the whole Truth of Godif you go down to the bedrock of actual factit is always God who seeks sinners. He always calls them a people who are not a people and the first movement between God and the sinner is never on the sinners part, but on Gods part. Still, apparently, men begin to pray to God and begin to seek the Lordand this is the usual order in which salvation comes to them. The prodigal said, I will arise and go to my father, and he arose and came to his father. The blind man cried, Jesus, you Son of David, have mercy on me.

Our text, however, describes a case which shows the freeness of Divine Mercy, for, although Zacchaeus did not invite Christ to his house, Christ invited Himself. Though there was no asking Him to be a guest, much less any pressing entreaty on the part of Zacchaeus, Christ pressed Himself upon him and said to him, Make haste, and come down; for to-day I must stay at your house. I reckon that there are some here who are on an errand something like that of Zacchaeus. They want, perhaps, to see the preacherwhich is not nearly as good a thing as wanting to see the preachers Master. Still, that curiosity has brought them into the place where Jesus of Nazareth is known to come and I do pray that He may find many to whom He will say, Make haste, and come and receive Me; for I must stay, this very night, with you and dwell in your house and heart at this time and forever.

I. The first thing I am going to talk about is THE DIVINE NECESSITY WHICH PRESSED UPON THE SAVIOR. He says, I must. Today I must stay at your house.

I do not think of this so much as a necessity upon Zacchaeus as upon Christ. You know that He felt this must at other times. In John 4:4, we read, He must needs go through Samaria. There was a sacred necessity that He should go that way. The most notable instance of all was when Jesus began to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. In this case, the must was of another kindHe must stay in the house of Zacchaeus. What necessity was this which pressed so urgently upon our blessed Master? There were many other houses in Jericho beside that of the tax gatherer. I daresay there were other persons who would, apparently, have been more suitable hosts for the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet it was not really so. There was a mighty pressure upon Him, who is the Omnipotent Lord of all! Necessity was laid upon Him who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He was His own Master, yet He must do something to which He was constrained by an urgent necessityHe must go and lodge that night nowhere else but at the house of Zacchaeus. What did this must mean?

I answer, first, it was a necessity of love. Our Lord Jesus needed to bless somebody. He had seen Zacchaeus and He knew what his occupation was and what his sin wasand He felt that He must bless him. As He looked at him, He felt as a mother does concerning her child when it is ill and she must nurse it. Or as you might feel concerning a starving man, whom you saw to be ready to expire with hunger, and you felt that you must feed him. Or as some men have felt when they have seen a fellow creature drowning, and they have plunged in to save him. They did not stop to think. They dared to do the brave deed without a thought, for they felt that they must do it. The compulsions of charity, the necessities of benevolencethese urgent things laid violent hands upon them, so they must do it. Thus Jesus feltonly in a much higher sensethat He must bless Zacchaeus. He must go to his house, that He might enter his heart, to stay there and to make Zacchaeus holy and happy henceforth and forever! And He is the same Christ, now, that He was thenHe is not less loving, He is the same gracious Savior and He feels the same necessity, the same hunger after souls, the same thirst of love to bless the sons of men and I, therefore, hopefully expect that there will be, even in this place and, I hope, in many other parts of the world, some of whom it will be true that the Lord Jesus Christ must come to their house and heart! So, this was a necessity arising out of our Saviors Divine benevolence and love.

Next, I think it was a necessity of His Sovereignty. I must stay at your house. Here were scribes, Pharisees and all sorts of people around Him who were saying, He is a Prophet! He has opened a blind mans eyes and He must, therefore, as a Prophet, be entertained by some notable Pharisee! Some very respectable person must find Him a lodging tonight. But our Lord Jesus Christ seems to say, I cannot be bound. I will not be fettered. I must exert My own will. I must display My Sovereignty and though these people will all murmur, I cannot help that. Zacchaeus, I will come and stay with you, just to show them that I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion!

You see, this man smelled bad! We are not very fond of tax gatherers here, but in the East, they like them still less than we do! And among the Jews, a tax gatherer, if he was a Jew who came to collect an obnoxious impost by a foreign power upon a people who thought that they were the people of God and ought to be free, was a man who was intensely hated for having stooped to become one of the farmers of taxes! And if he was the chief contractor of customs, as Zacchaeus was, he had a very bad name, indeed! People did not cultivate his acquaintance. They seldom dropped in to tea at his house and, as a general rule, they spoke very evilly of him. When they mentioned sinners, they always reckoned that Zacchaeus, who had made a fine thing out of the business they specially loathed, and was reputed to be very rich, was one of the very worst nobody thought much of him. I think, too, that he had been excommunicated by a law of the Sanhedrim, for the publicans were generally regarded as excommunicated personsshut out, certainly, from the society of more respectable people.

Besides, to my mind, Zacchaeus was an eccentric sort of person. That running of his was a very strange action for such a man! Wealthy men, even though they happen to be short of stature, do not generally take to running through the streets and climbing trees! I should think Zacchaeus was the sort of man who kept to himself and who, when he meant to do a thing, would do itand if it was to climb a tree, as a boy mighthe did not mind that, for he had got beyond caring for public opinion! He was an oddityhe may have been a very good sort of fellow in some respects, but it is quite clear that he was an odd sort of person. So our Lord Jesus Christ seemed to say, I will show these people that when I save men, it is not because they stand well in society, or because they enjoy an excellent reputation, or because there are some beautiful points in their character. I will save this odd man, this Zacchaeus, this despised tax gatherer. I must have himhe is just the sort of man in whom I can best display the Sovereignty of My Grace. To this day, men cannot bear that Doctrine! Free will suits them very well, but Free Grace does not! They would not let Christ choose His own wifeI say it with the utmost reverence. I mean they would not let Him have the choice of His own bride, His Church, but say that must be left to the will of men! But Christ will have His way, whatever they may say. He has a sacred determination in His blessed heart, that He will do as He pleases and so, for that reason, He says to Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house.

Our Lord Jesus was also under another necessity, He needed someone in whom He could display the great power of His Grace. He needed a sinner, to begin with. That was to be the raw material out of which He was going to make a saint and a saint of a very special character. Is there a Christian in this place who comes up to the standard of Zacchaeus after he was converted? I do not wish to be censorious, but I doubt if there is one. Is there anybody here who gives away half his income to the poor? I think that was going a long way in Grace in the matter of almsgiving. And then remember that he was but a babe in Grace when he did that so what he did when he grew older, I do not know. But the first day he was born to Christ, he was a saint of that kind! What kind of a saint he grew to be, by-and-by, I can scarcely imagine! Lord, out of what material did You make such a generous soul as this? What? Out of a grasping, grinding tax gatherer, who sought to grab all he could lay his hands on, the mighty Grace of God, better than a magic wand, opened his closed heart and made it gush forth like a fountain flowing in a thousand generous streams! Jesus seems to say, I must have Zacchaeus so that the men of the world may see what I can make out of the most unlikely materialhow I can take coarse pebbles from the brook and transmute them into diamonds! How I can bedeck my crown with jewels of the first water, which were originally but as the common stones of the street.

I wonder whether there is anybody here who feels that he has not anything at all in him that is any good whatever? If so, the Lord could say, I will make something of that man that will cause all who know him to marvel. I will make his wife wonder what has changed him. I will make all his children say, What has come over Father? I will make the whole parish say, What a miracle! What a miracle! This was the kind of must that was laid upon our Savior and I hope such a must is laid upon Him now!

There was one more must upon Him, namely, He must stay in the house of Zacchaeus because Zacchaeus was to be His host at Jericho. Even the Savior must be lodged somewhere and, in most places, His Father had appointed some gracious spirit to entertain Himand Zacchaeus was to be His host that day. And if He ever came that way again, I feel certain that He would go to His old quarters. Blessed be my Masters dear name, He still has some hosts left where the guest chamber is always ready for Him! In every town, village and hamlet, there is some house where there is a Prophets chamber, and if you were to ask, Is there anybody here who will entertain the Lord Jesus Christ? You would soon find people who would be glad to have His company! Perhaps there is a large upper room, furnished and prepared, where they might break bread together. Or a little room where two or three might meet with Jesusa place that never seems so bright as when there are a few praying people met together in it! The Lord must be entertained in this world and Zacchaeus was to be the man to entertain Him in Jericho!

Who is the one here now who will take Jesus in? A stranger from the country, perhaps? There is no preaching place in your village, the Gospel is not often proclaimed within miles of the place where you live and few people go to hear it when it is preached. That is all the more reason why Jesus must come to your house, for He means to have your best room, or that old shed of yours, or that big barnthat the Gospel may be preached there! There is a Divine necessity laid upon Him to have your heart for Himself so that He may come and dwell with you, and make your house His headquarters, where His disciples may go forth to attack the enemy where you live and that all in your region may know that the true Salvation Army has come thereand that the Captain of our salvation has Himself come to make His abode in your house and your heart!

There is plenty of room for enlargement upon this point, but we must go on to the next one.   
II. So, secondly, LET US ENQUIRE WHETHER THERE IS SUCH A NECESSITY IN REFERENCE TO OURSELVES. Has the Lord Jesus Christ any necessity to come and stay at your house, to come and abide in your heart? I can answer that question best by putting a few enquiries to you.   
First, are you willing to receive Christ at once? Then, there is a necessity laid upon Him to come to you, for He never sent the will into a man without also sending His Grace with the will! Indeed, the willingness to receive Him is the proof of the working of His Grace! Do you long and sigh that Christ might be yours? Then you shall surely have Him! Are you earnestly anxious to be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ? Then you may have that great blessing at once! Are you thirsting after righteousness? Then you shall be filled, for what say the Scriptures? Let him who is thirsty, come. And lest anybody should say, Oh, but there is some preparation implied in that word, thirst, and I am afraid that I do not thirst enough. What does the Scripture further say? And whoever will whoever willlet him take the water of life freely.   
Next, will you heartily receive Jesus? Zacchaeus received Him joyfully and if you will do the same, then He must stay at your house! I think I hear somebody say, Receive Him joyfully? Ah, that I would if He would but come to me. I would give all I have to have Christ as my Savior, to have the new life implanted within me and to have Jesus dwelling in my heart. I would be willing to live, or willing be die if I might but have Him as mine. So you will receive Him joyfully, will you? Ah, then He is bound to come to you! When the door of your heart is opened, Jesus will not be long before He enters. He will stand and knock even at a closed door therefore I am sure that He will enter an open one! It is written of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, and her heart was not long open before the Lord entered it. And if yours is open to Christ, that is a proof that you are one of those in whom He must stay at this time!   
Let me ask you another question. Will you receive Christ, whatever the murmurers may say? Suppose He comes to you and they begin to murmur, as they did when He went to be the guest of Zacchaeus? I do not know where you live, but those around you will be sure to find fault both with you and with your Lord, too. They all murmured, saying that He was going to be guest with a man that is a sinner. So, you see, they were murmuring at Zacchaeus as well as at Christ, and you will have the same sort of treatment when you receive Christ. Those who used to say, You are a fine fellow, when they find that you have become a Christian, will call you a mean spirited wretch! As long as you give them something to drink, they will say what a jolly dog you are! But as soon as you have done with their ways, you will be literally like a dog to them and they will have nothing for you but kicks and curses!   
In more respectable society you know how they give a Christian the cold shoulder. Nothing is actually said, but there is a very clear intimation that your absence is preferred to your company when you once become a Christian. Can you bear that? Can you dare that? Because if Christ comes to your house and heart, you must expect that He will bring His Cross with Him. Are you willing to have Christ, Cross and all, and to say, Let the murmurers say what they will and do what they will, my mind is made up, Christ for me, Christ for me! I cannot give Him up?   
Further, will you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord? Zacchaeus did so, for he said, Behold, Lord. Now, are you willing to give up all to Christ and to let Him be Lord over you? Are you willing to do what He bids you, as He bids you, when He bids you and simply because He bids you? For, verily, I say unto you, you cannot have Christ for your Savior unless you also have Him as your Lord! He must rule over us as well as forgive us! As one of our poets says  
*Yet know, nor of the terms complain,   
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign!   
To reign and with no partial sway   
Thoughts must be slain that disobey.*   
Sins must be given up, evil practices must be forsaken. You must follow after holiness and endeavor in all things to imitate your Savior who has left you an example that you should follow His steps. Are you ready for that? Because if you are, then Christ is ready to stay at your house and to dwell in your heart!

Once more, will you be prepared to defend Him? If Jesus comes to a house, it becomes the duty of the host to defend Him. So Zacchaeus, not in boasting, but as a kind of answer to the sneers of the murmurers, when they said that Christ had gone to dwell with a sinner, seemed to say, But I am no longer a sinner, as I used to be. If I have wronged anybody, I will restore it fourfold and, henceforth, the half of my income shall be given in alms to the poor. That was the best defense he could give and Christ must be defended by the changed lives of His disciples. You must live so that when men attempt to attack the Savior, they may be compelled to say, Well, after all, that man is the better for being a Christian. Your children may rail at religion, but they will be compelled to say, We could speak against Christ and Christians generally, but when we think of how our mother lived and how she died, our tongues are silenced. Then, there is our old nurse who feared the Lordmany a joke did we crack about her religion! But, ah, there was something about her that was so heavenly that we were obliged to believe in the reality of it whether we would or not.

Yes, dear Friends, if the Lord Jesus Christ should come to your house, you must say, It shall be my hearts ambition, as long as I live, to defend His cause by the holiness of the character which I trust His Holy Spirit will work in me. If this is the case with any of you, then He must stay at your house tonight. God grant that He may do so!

III. Now I must close by reminding you of WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF CHRIST COMES TO STAY IN YOUR HOUSE.   
First, you must be ready to meet objections at home. You who say that you are willing to receive my Master, are you quite sure that you know what that reception involves? Christ says that He wishes to stay at your house and that He must do so, and you say, Yes, my Lord, I gladly welcome You to my heart and my home. But wait a moment, my Friend! Have you asked your wife about that matter? You know that you must not bring strangers homeshe will be down upon you if you do. Have you counted the cost of your decision? And, my good woman, you say, I want to bring Christ home with me. Have you asked your husband about it? Sometimes a dear child says, Jesus Christ shall abide with me. But what will Father say? For, alas, often, the father is at enmity against God. If that is the case in your home, are you prepared to endure persecution for Christs sake? Our Lord Himself said, A mans foes shall be they of his own household. And it is often so. David said to Jonathan, What if your father answers you roughly? Suppose that is your experiencecan you keep true to Christ under such circumstances? Can you say, I love my wife. I love my child, I love my father, but I love Jesus more than all of them and I must have Christ in my heart, and in my house, even if it brings war there? Ah, then, He will come to your house if that is your resolve. But if not, He will not come to take the second place. He will not come there if you turn coward at the first jest that is made against you, or the first hard thing that is spoken against your Lord. But He will come to your house if, despite all rebuffs and rebukes, you are determined that He shall make His abode with you.   
But, next, is your house fit for Him to enter, and abide there? I know some houses where my Lord could not lodge for a single night! The table, the talk, the whole surroundings would be so uncongenial to Him. Are you prepared, then, to put away everything that would displease Him and to have your house cleansed of all that is evil? You cannot expect the Lord Jesus to come into your house if you invite the devil to come, too! Christ would not remain in the same Heaven with the devilas soon as Satan sinned, He hurled him out of the holy place. He could not endure to have a sinful spirit, the spirit of evil, there, and He will not come and live in your house if you make provision for the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and all those evil things that He abhors. Are you prepared, by His Grace, to make a clean sweep of these things? He will not come to you on any other terms.   
Further, we must admit none who would grieve our Guest. It is hard to lodge with some people because their children are so badly behaved. My Lord loves not to dwell in families where Eli is at the head of the household and where the children and young people live as they like. If He comes to your house, He will want you to be like Abraham, of whom He said, I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. If He comes to your house, you must ask Him to come in the same way that He came to the house of the jailor at Philippi. How was that? I have often heard half of that passage quoted without the contextSirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and your house. Many leave out those last three words, and your house. But what a mercy it is when all in the house, as well as the head of the family, have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! Do you not wish that it may be so in your house? Do you not ardently desire it? I trust that you do.   
Once more, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes into your house, you must entertain Him. He needs no riches at your hands, yet He wants the best that you have. What is the best that you have? Why, your heart, your soul! Give Him your heart, give Him your life, give Him your very self! If you had to entertain the Queenif she had promised to come and spend an evening with youI will guarantee that you would be fidgeting and worrying for weeks about what you should get for such an occasion! And if you have but little means, you would try to get the very best that you could. I frequently used to go and preach in a country place where I stayed at a farmand the dear old man who lived there used to have about a hundred pounds of beef, at the very least, on his table! And when, year after year, I noticed such enormous joints, I said to him, one day, You must have a very curious idea of my appetiteit is not possible that I should ever get through these masses of meat that you put on your table. Oh, he replied, we get through it all very easily after you are gone, for there are plenty of poor people and plenty of farm laborers round about, and they soon clear it up. But, I enquired, why do you have so much when I come? Bless you, Sir, he answered, I would give you a piece as big as a house if I could get itI would, indeedjust to show you how welcome you are at my home. I understood what he meant and appreciated his kindness and, in a far higher sense, let us all do as much as we possibly can to show the Lord Jesus how welcome He is to our heart and our home!   
How welcome He ought always to be when He comes, as our blessed Savior, to put away our sin and change our nature, and honor us with His royal company, and keep and preserve us even to the end that He may take us up and our children, too, to dwell at His right hand forever! Oh, there ought to be grand entertainment for such a Guest as He is! Where is the man who is going to ask Him home tonight? Here stands my Master and in His name I askwho will take Him home tonight? With whom shall Jesus lodge tonight? Oh, says one, if He would but come to me, I would be glad enough to welcome Him. He is glad enough to come, for He delights to be entertained in human hearts. O you soldiers over there, with the red coats onI am always glad to see you here shall Jesus Christ abide with you tonight? And you others, in black coats, or in colored dresses, shall Jesus Christ abide with you tonight? You good friends who are up from the country, if you have not taken Christ into your hearts, will you not take Him in now? I cannot hear what you say, but He can, and if this is the reply, God be merciful to me a sinner, and come and lodge with me tonight, it shall be done, and His shall be the praise!   
Now the time has gone, but I must say just these few words more. I remember that when I was crying to God for mercy and I could get no answer to my supplication, so that I feared I must really give up prayer as hopeless, the thought which kept me praying was this, Well, if I do not get salvation, I shall perish. I seemed to fancy that the Lord had kept me waitingthat was only my foolish way of thinking and it was not truebut I said to myself, If the Lord keeps me waiting, I also kept Him waiting a long while. Was I not for many years resisting Him and refusing Him? So if He makes me wait for salvation, I must not complain. Then I thought, Well, now, if I were to keep on praying and I did not find Christ for 20 years, yet, if I found Him at last, the blessing would be well worth having and worth waiting for, so I will never leave off praying for it. And then I thought, Why should I expect that I must be heard the moment I choose to come to the Mercy Seat, when I would not hear Gods call when He so often spoke to me? So I still persevered in prayer, yet with this thoughtwhat else can I do?like a whip always upon my back. I felt that this must be my resolve   
*I can but perish if I go.   
I am resolved to try!   
For if I stay away,   
I know I must forever die.*   
I like that plan which I have known to be followed by some who have gone to their room and shut the door, determined not to go out till they had found the Savior. They have read the Word, especially such passages as these, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. And they have gone down on their knees and have said, Lord, this is Your promise. Help me now to believe in Jesus and give me salvation for His sake, for I will not leave this place without Your blessing! Such vehemence, such importunity is sure to prevail! How dare anyone of you continue to live unsaved? How dare you, Sir, again close your eyes in sleep while you are unreconciled to God? What if, instead of waking up in that bedroom of yours, you should lift up your eyes and say, Where am I? What is this dreadful place? Where are the things I once loved? Where are the things I lived for? Where am I? Where is Christ! Where is the Gospel? Where are Sabbath days? Where are the warning words I used to despise? Where is the power to pray? Is all this gone forever? And where am I? In dark, dark, dire despairan enemy to You, O God, and an enemy to You forever! Horror and dismay have taken hold upon me.   
The very attempt to depict that awful scene makes me feel as though dread would stop my tongue. Oh, I pray you, go not there! There are some who deny the eternity of future punishment, but, for my part, I would not risk such suffering for an hour even if it should end then. What woe it would be to be only an hour in Hell! Oh, how you would then wish that you had sought the Savior and had found Him! But, alas, there is no such thing as an hour in Hell! Once lost, you are lost forever! Therefore seek the Lord now! Cry with Jeremiah, O Lord our God, we will wait upon You! You cannot fight it out! You cannot escape from everlasting wrath unless you trust in Jesus, so let this be your cry

*You, O Christ, are all I need   
More than all in You I find!   
Other refuge have I none,   
Hangs my helpless soul on You!*   
So, Christ of God, we cast ourselves into Your arms! Save us, save us, save us for Your sweet mercys sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 18:36-43; 19:1-10.**

Luke 18:35-38. And it came to pass, that as He was come near unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passes by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, You son of David, have mercy on me! He did not need to be told twice who was passing by, nor did he need any exhortation to seek Christs help. It was enough for him that Jesus of Nazareth was near him, so he would cry to Him for the help He alone could give. Oh, that we were half as sensible! Oh, that the blindness did not get into mens hearts! If it were not so, every blind soul would at once begin to cry to God for mercy! There is not one poor sinner here who knows that Jesus often passes this way, who would not begin at once to cry, You Son of David, have mercy on me.

39. And they which went before rebuked him. Be quiet! they cried.  
39. That he should hold his peace. Do not interrupt the flow of those marvelous words, or break the thread of that matchless discourse.   
39. But he cried so much the more, You son of David, have mercy on me! They could not quench the fire that burned within his breast! They did but increase its intensity by all their efforts to put it out. The blind man was so earnest to get his eyes opened that his voice could not be silenced. This was a proof of his commonsense and true wisdom. It is remarkable how clearly the blind people mentioned in the Scriptures could see! Oh, that those who think they can see could really see as plainly as this blind man could, and would act as wisely as he did! He cried so much the more, You Son of David, have mercy on me! This was his only hopeperhaps his last opportunityso he availed himself of it to the fullest.   
40, 41. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be brought to Him: and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What will you that I shall do unto you? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. There was no waste of words. He said what he meant and he meant what he said, and he knew what he needed. It is a great thing, in prayer, to know what we really needa very important thing to be sensible enough not to multiply words, but to cry to the Lord with a definite objective, as this blind man said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.   
42, 43. And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight; your faith has saved you. And immediately he received his sight and followed Him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. That was a blessed Praise Meeting, brought about by the healing of that one man! Now that his eyes were opened, he showed that his mouth was not closed. He proved that he could pray well. Now he proves that he can also praise well! He prayed when they tried to stop him, but now nobody shall stop him from praise! And he so praised the great Physician that, with the flaming firebrand of his gratitudeand he set all other hearts ablazeAll the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. Luke 19:1. And Jesus entered. That is, He entered at one end of the town   
1. And passed through Jericho. And so came out at the other end of it.   
2. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. It was an important station for the collection of customsthere was a good deal of produce at Jericho upon which there was a tax, so Zacchaeus had a good post. He was rich.   
3-7. And he sought to see Jesus who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for today I must stay at your house. And he made haste and came down and received Him joyfully, And when they saw it, they all murmured. Some of the very people, I suppose, who had just before given praise to God. So fickle are the judgments of men that we need not be elated when all of them speak well of us. It only needs that the wind should veer just half a point and they will all speak ill of us! The cry of men, even when it is most clear and strong, is not to be depended on. They shout Hosanna, today, but, before the week is out, they cry, Crucify Him! Crucify Him. So here, They murmured.  
8. Saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. I do not know where else He could have gone, for they were all sinners! But they meant that this tax gatherer was a sinner. By public reputation, he was an excommunicated person who was regarded by everybody as a sinner in a very special sense.   
8. And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. Henceforth, one half of my income shall go in almsgiving.   
8. And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. I will not give to the poor or to God that which is not lawfully mine. I will not steal a sheep and give the feet to the poor, but I will give back, four times over, anything that I may have taken wrongfully and still the half of my future income shall go to the poor.   
9, 10. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

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EFFECTUAL CALLING (IRRESISTIBLE GRACE)   
NO. 73

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 6, 1856,   
BY THE REV C H. SPURGEON,**   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today must I abide at your house.   
Luke 19:5.**

Notwithstanding our firm belief that you are, for the most part, well instructed in the Doctrines of the everlasting Gospel, we are continually reminded in our conversation with young converts how absolutely necessary it is to repeat our former lessons and repeatedly assert and prove over and over again those Doctrines which lie at the basis of our holy religion. Our friends, therefore, who have many years ago been taught the great Doctrine of Effectual Calling, will believe that while I preach very simply this morning, the sermon is intended for those who are young in the fear of the Lordthat they may better understand this great starting point of God in the heartthe Effectual Calling of men by the Holy Spirit. I shall use the case of Zaccheus as a great illustration of the Doctrine of Effectual Calling. You remember the story. Zaccheus had a curiosity to see the wonderful Man, Jesus Christ, who was turning the world upside down and causing an immense excitement in the minds of men. We sometimes find fault with curiosity and say it is sinful to come to the House of God from that motive. I am not quite sure that we should hazard such an assertion. The motive is not sinful, though certainly it is not virtuousyet it has often been proved that curiosity is one of the best allies of Grace. Zaccheus, moved by this motive, desired to see Christbut there were two obstacles in the wayfirst, there was such a crowd of people that he could not get near the Savior. Second, he was so exceedingly short in stature that there was no hope of his reaching over peoples heads to catch a glimpse of Him. What did he do? He did as the boys were doingfor the boys of old times were, no doubt, just like the boys of the present agethey were perched up in the branches of a tree to look at Jesus as He passed along! Elderly man though he is, Zaccheus jumps up and there he sits among the children! The boys are too much afraid of that stern old Publican, whom their fathers dreaded, to push him down or cause him any inconvenience. Look at him therewith what anxiety he is peeping down to see which is Christfor the Savior had no pompous distinction. No one is walking before Him with a silver mace. He did not hold a golden crozier in His handHe had no pontifical dress. In fact, He was dressed just like those around Him! He had a coat like that of a common peasant, made of one piece from top to bottom. Zaccheus could scarcely distinguish Him. However, before he has caught a sight of Christ, Christ has fixed His eyes upon him and, standing under the tree, He looks up and says, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at your house. Down comes Zaccheus! Christ goes to his house. Zaccheus becomes Christs follower and enters into the Kingdom of Heaven!

I. Now, first, Effectual Calling is a very gracious Truth of God. You may guess this from the fact that Zaccheus was a character whom we would suppose the last to be saved. He belonged to a bad cityJericho a city which had been cursed and no one would suspect that anyone would come out of Jericho to be saved! It was near Jericho that the man fell among thieveswe trust Zaccheus had no hand in itbut there are some who, while they are Publicans, can be thieves, also. We might as well expect converts from St. Giless, or the lowest parts of London, from the worst and vilest dens of infamy, as from Jericho in those days! Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, it matters not where you come fromyou may come from one of the dirtiest streets, one of the worst back slums in Londonif Effectual Grace calls you, it is an Effectual Call which knows no distinction of place! Zaccheus also was of an exceedingly bad trade and probably cheated the people in order to enrich himself. Indeed, when Christ went into his house, there was an universal murmur that He had gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner! But, my Brothers and Sisters, Divine Grace knows no distinctionit is no respecter of persons! God calls whom He wills and He called this worst of Publicans, in the worst of cities, from the worst of trades! Besides, Zaccheus was one who was the least likely to be saved because he was rich. It is true, rich and poor are welcomeno one has the least excuse for despair because of his conditionyet it is a fact that, not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are called, but, God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith. But even here, Grace knows no distinction. The

rich Zaccheus is called from the tree. Down he comes and he is saved. I have thought it one of the greatest instances of Gods condescension that He can look down on man. But I will tell you there was a greater condescension than that when Christ looked up to see Zaccheus! For God to look down on His creaturesthat is mercybut for Christ so to humble Himself that He has to look up to one of His own creaturesthat becomes mercy, indeed! Ah, many of you have climbed up the tree of your own good works and perched yourselves in the branches of your holy actions and are trusting in the free will of the poor creature, or resting in some worldly maxim. Nevertheless, Christ looks up even to proud sinners and calls them down. Come down, He says, today I must abide at your house. Had Zaccheus been a humble-minded man, sitting by the wayside, or at the feet of Christ, we would then have admired Christs mercy. But here he is lifted up and Christ looks up to him and bids him come down!

II. Next it was a personal call. There were boys in the tree as well as Zaccheus but there was no mistake about the person who was called. It was, Zaccheus, make haste and come down. There are other calls mentioned in Scripture. It is said, especially, Many are called, but few are chosen. Now that is not the Effectual Call which is intended by the Apostle when he said, Whom He called, them He also justified. That is a general call which many men, yes, all men reject, unless there comes after it the personal, particular call, which makes us Christians. You will bear me witness that it was a personal call that brought you to the Savior. It was some sermon which led you to feel that you were, no doubt, the person intended. The text, perhaps, was, You, God, see me. And perhaps the minister laid particular stress on the word, me, so that you thought Gods eyes were fixed upon you. And before the sermon was concluded, you thought you saw God open the books to condemn you and your heart whispered, Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord. You might have been perched in the window, or stood packed in the aislebut you had a solemn conviction that the sermon was preached to you and not to other people! God does not call His people in shoals but in units. Jesus said unto her, Mary, and she turned and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus sees Peter and John fishing by the lake and He says to them, Follow Me. He sees Matthew sitting at the table at the receipt of custom and He says unto him, Arise and follow Me, and Matthew did so. When the Holy Spirit comes home to a man, Gods arrow goes into his heartit does not graze his helmet, or make some little mark upon his armorit penetrates between the joints of the harness, entering the marrow of the soul. Have you felt, dear Friends, that personal call? Do you remember when a voice said, Arise, He calls you. Can you look back to when you said, My Lord, my Godwhen you knew the Spirit was striving with you and you said, Lord, I come to You, for I know that You call me? I might call the whole of you throughout eternity but if God calls one, there will be more effect through His personal call of one, than my general call of multitudes!

III. Thirdly, it is a hastening call. Zaccheus, make haste. The sinner, when he is called by the ordinary ministry, replies, Tomorrow. He hears a telling sermon and he says, I will turn to God. by-and-by. The tears roll down his cheeks, but they are wiped away. Some goodness appears, but like the cloud of the morning it is dissipated by the sun of temptation. He says, I solemnly vow from this time to be a reformed man. After I have once more indulged in my darling sin I will renounce my lusts and decide for God. Ah, that is only a ministers call and is good for nothing! Hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. These good intentions are begotten by general calls! The road to Hell is laid all over with branches of the trees whereon men are sitting, for they often pull down branches from the trees, but they do not come down, themselves. The straw laid down before a sick mans door causes the wheels to roll more noiselessly. So there are some who strew their path with promises of repentance and so go more easily and noiselessly down to the pit of Hell! But Gods call is not a call for tomorrow. Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts: as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted Me. Gods Grace always comes with dispatchand if you are drawn by God, you will run after God and not be talking about delays! Tomorrowit is not written in the almanac of time. Tomorrowit is in Satans calendar and nowhere else! Tomorrowit is a rock whitened by the bones of mariners who have been wrecked upon it. Tomorrow is the wreckers light gleaming on the shore, luring poor ships to destruction. Tomorrowit is the idiots cup which he lies at the foot of the rainbow, but which none has ever found. Tomorrowit is the floating island of Loch Lomond, which none has ever seen. Tomorrowit is a dream. Tomorrowit is a delusion. Tomorrow, yes, tomorrow you may lift up your eyes in Hell, being in torment. Yonder clock says, today. Your pulse whispers, today. I hear my heart speak as it beats and it says, today. Everything cries, today. And the Holy Spirit is in union with these things and says, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Sinners, are you inclined now to seek the Savior? Are you breathing a prayer right now? Are you saying, Now or never! I must be saved now? If you are, then I hope it is an Effectual Call, for Christ, when He gives an Effectual Call, says, Zaccheus, make haste.

IV. Next, it is a humbling call. Zaccheus, make haste and come down. Many a time has a minister called men to repentance with a call which has made them proud, exalted them in their own esteem and led them to say, I can turn to God when I like! I can do so without the influence of the Holy Spirit. They have been called to go up and not to come down. God always humbles a sinner. Can I not remember when God told me to come down? One of the first steps I had to take was to go right down from my good works. And oh, what a fall was that! Then I stood upon my own self-sufficiency and Christ said, Come down! I have pulled you down from your good works and now I will pull you down from your selfsufficiency. Well, I had another fall and I felt sure I had gained the bottom, but Christ said, Come down! And He made me come down till I fell on some point at which I felt I was not savable. Down, Sir! Come down, yet. And down I came until I had to let go of every branch of the tree of my hopes in despair. Then I said, I can do nothing. I am ruined. The waters were wrapped round my head and I was shut out from the light of day and thought myself a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel. Come down lower, still, Sir! You have too much pride to be saved. Then I was brought down to see my corruption, my wickedness, my filthiness. Come down, says God, when He means to save! Now, proud Sinners, it is of no use for you to be proud, to stick yourselves up in the treesChrist will have you down. Oh, you that dwell with the eagle on the craggy rock, you shall come down from your elevationyou shall fall by Grace, or you shall fall with a vengeance one day. He has cast down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble and meek.

V. Next, it is an affectionate call. Today I must abide at your house. You can easily conceive how the faces of the multitude change! They thought Christ to be the holiest and best of men and were ready to make Him a king! But He says, Today I must abide at your house. There was one poor Jew who had been inside Zaccheus househe had been on the carpet, as they say in country villages when they are taken before the justiceand he recollected what sort of a house it was. He remembered how he was taken in there and his conceptions of it were something like what a fly would have of a spiders den after he had once escaped! There was another who had been relieved of nearly all his propertythe idea he had of walking in there was like walking into a den of lions! What? they said, Is this holy Man going into such a den as that, where we poor wretches have been robbed and ill-treated? It was bad enough for Christ to speak to him up in the tree, but the idea of going into his house! They all murmured at His going to be a guest with a man who was a sinner. Well, I know what some of His disciples thoughtthey thought it very imprudentit might injure His Character and He might offend the people. They thought He might have gone to see this man at night, like Nicodemus, and give him an audience when nobody saw Him! To acknowledge such a man publicly was the most imprudent act He could commit! Why did Christ do as He did? Because He would give Zaccheus an affectionate call. I will not come and stand at your threshold, or look in at your window, but I will come into your housethe same house where the cries of widows have come into your ears and you have disregarded them. I will come into your parlor, where the weeping of the orphan has never moved your compassion. I will come therewhere you, like a ravenous lion have devoured your prey. I will come there, where you have blackened your house and made it infamous. I will come into the place where cries have risen to high Heaven, wrung from the lips of those whom you have oppressed! I will come into your house and give you a blessing.

Oh, what affection there was in that! Poor Sinner, my Master is a very affectionate Master! He will come into your house. What kind of a house have you got? A house that you have made miserable with your drunkennessa house you have defiled with your impuritya house you have defiled with your cursing and swearinga house where you are carrying on an illegal trade that you would be glad to get rid of? Christ says, I will come into your house. And I know some houses, now, that once were dens of sin where Christ comes every morning! Husband and wife, who once only could quarrel and fight, bend their knees together in prayer! Christ comes there at dinnertime, when the workman comes home for his meals. Some of my hearers can scarcely come for an hour to their meals but they must have word of prayer and reading of the Scriptures! Christ comes to them! Where the walls were plastered up with the lascivious songs and idle pictures, there is a Christian almanac in one place. There is a Bible on the chest of drawersand though it is only one room they live inif an angel should come in and God should say, What have you seen in that house? he would say, I have seen good furniture, for there is a Bible therehere and there a religious bookthe filthy pictures are pulled down and burned. There are no cards in the mans cupboard, now. Christ has come into his house. Oh, what a blessing that we have our Household God as well as the Romans! Our God is a Household God. He comes to live with His people! He loves the tents of Jacob. Now, poor rag-muffin Sinner, you who live in the filthiest den in Londonif such an one is here, Jesus says to you, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must

abide at your house.

VI. Again, it was not only an affectionate call, but it was an abiding call. Today I must abide at your house. A common call is like this, Today I shall walk into your house at one door and out at the other. The common call which is given by the Gospel to all men is a call which operates upon them for a time and then it is all overbut the saving call is an abiding call. When Christ speaks, He does not say, Make haste, Zaccheus and come down, for I am just coming to look in. No. He says, I must abide at your house. I am coming to sit down to eat and drink with you. I am coming to have a meal with you. Today I must abide at your house. Ah, says one, you cannot tell how many times I have been impressed, Sir. I have often had a series of solemn convictions and I thought I was really savedbut it all died awaylike a dream. When one awakes, all has vanished that he dreamed. So was it with me. Ah, but poor Soul, do not despair! Do you feel the strivings of Almighty Grace within your heart bidding you repent today? If you do, it will be an abiding call. If it is Jesus at work in your soul, He will come and tarry in your heart and consecrate you for His own forever! He says, I will come and dwell with you and that, forever. I will come and say

*Here I will make My settled rest,   
No more will go and come.   
No more a stranger or a guest,   
But Master of this home.*

Oh, you say, that is what I want! I want an abiding call, something that will last. I do not want a religion that will wash out, but a fast-color religion. Well, that is the kind of call Christ gives! His ministers cannot give itbut when Christ speaks, He speaks with power and says, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at your house.

VII. There is one thing, however, I cannot forget, and that is that it was a necessary call. Just read it over again. Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at your house. It was not a thing that He might do, or might not doit was a necessary call! The salvation of a sinner is as much a matter of necessity with God as the fulfillment of His Covenant that the rain shall no more drown the world. The salvation of every blood-bought child of God is a necessary thing for three reasonsIt is necessary because it is Gods purpose. It is necessary because it is Christs purchase and it is necessary because it is Gods promise. It is necessary that the child of God should be saved. Some divines think it is very wrong to lay a stress on the word, must, especially in that passage where it is said, He must go through Samaria. Why, they say, He must go through Samaria because there was no other way He could go and, therefore, He was forced to go that way. Yes, Gentlemen, we reply, no doubt. But then there might have been another way. Providence made it so that He must go through Samaria and that Samaria should lie in the route He had chosen. He must go through Samaria. Providence directed man to build Samaria directly in the road and Grace compelled the Savior to move in that direction. It was not, Come down, Zaccheus, because I may abide at your house, but, I must. The Savior felt a strong necessity. Just as much a necessity as there is that man should die. As strong a necessity as there is that the sun should give us light by day and the moon by nightjust so much a necessity is there that every blood-bought child of God shall be saved! Today I must abide at your house. And oh, when the Lord comes to thisthat He mustthen He will! What a thing it is with the poor sinner, then! At other times we ask, Shall I let Him in at all? There is a Stranger at the door. He is knocking nowHe has knocked beforeshall I let Him in? But this time it is, I must abide at your house. There was no knocking at the door, but smash went the door into atoms! And in He walkedI must, I shall, I willI care not for your protecting your vileness, your unbelief. I must, I willI must abide at your house. Ah, says one, I do not believe God would ever make me to believe as you believe, or become a Christian at all. Ah, but if He shall but say, Today I must abide at your house, there will be no resistance in you. There are some of you who would scorn the very idea of being a canting MethodistWhat, Sir? Do you suppose I would ever turn into one of your religious people? No, my Friend, I dont suppose itI know it for a certaintyif God says, I must, there is no standing against it! Let Him say, must, and it will be!

I will just tell you an anecdote proving this. A father was about sending his son to college, but as he knew the influence to which he would be exposed, he was not without a deep and anxious solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his favorite child. Fearing lest the principles of Christian faith, which he had endeavored to instill into his mind, would be rudely assailed, but trusting in the efficacy of that Word which is quick and powerful, he purchased, unknown to his son, an elegant copy of the Bible and deposited it at the bottom of his trunk. The young man entered upon his college career. The restraints of a pious education were soon broken off and he proceeded from speculation to doubts and from doubts to a denial of the reality of religion! After having become, in his own estimation, wiser than his father, he discovered one day, while rummaging his trunk, with great surprise and indignation, the sacred deposit. He took it out and while deliberating on the manner in which he would treat it, he determined that he would use it as waste paper on which to wipe his razor while shaving. Accordingly, every time he went to shave, he tore out a leaf or two of the holy Book and thus used it till nearly half the volume was destroyed. But while he was committing this outrage upon the sacred Book, a text, now and then, met his eyes and was carried, like a barbed arrow, to his heart! At length, he heard a sermon which discovered to him his own character and his exposure to the wrath of God. It riveted upon his mindthe impression which he had received from the last torn leaf of the blessed, yet insulted Volume. Had worlds been at his disposal, he would freely have given them all, could they have availed in enabling him to undo what he had done! At length he found forgiveness at the foot of the Cross. The torn leaves of that sacred Volume brought healing to his soulfor they led him to repose on the mercy of Godwhich is sufficient for the chief of sinners! I tell you there is not a reprobate walking the streets and defiling the air with his blasphemies. There is not a creature abandoned so as to be well-nigh as bad as Satan, himselfif he is a child of lifewho is not within the reach of mercy! And if God says, Today I must abide at your house, He assuredly will!

Do you feel, my dear Hearer, just now, something in your mind which seems to say you have held out against the Gospel a long while, but today you can hold out no longer? Do you feel that a strong hand has got hold of you and do you hear a voice saying, Sinner, I must abide at your house. You have often scorned Me, you have often laughed at Me, you have often spit in the face of mercy, often blasphemed Me, but Sinner, I must abide at your house! You banged the door yesterday in the missionarys face. You burned the tract, you laughed at the minister, you have cursed Gods House, you have violated the Sabbathbut, Sinner, I must abide at your house and I will? What? Lord, you say, abide at my house? Why it is covered all over with iniquity. Abide in my house? Why there is not a chair or a table but would cry out against me. Abide in my house? Why the joists and beams and flooring would all rise up and tell You that I am not worthy to kiss the hem of Your garment! What? Lord, abide at my house? Yes, He says, I must. There is a strong necessity, My powerful Love compels Me and whether you will let Me or not, I am determined to make you willing and you shall let Me in. Does not this surprise you, poor Trembleryou who thought that mercys day was gone and that the bell of your destruction had tolled your death-knell? Oh, does not this surprise you, that Christ not only asks you to come to Him, but invites Himself to your table and, what is more, when you would send Him away, kindly says, I mustI will come in? Only think of Christ going after a sinner, crying after a sinner, begging a sinner to let Him save himand that is just what Jesus does to His chosen ones! The sinner runs away from Him, but Free Grace pursues him and says, Sinner, come to Christ. And if our hearts are shut up, Christ puts His hand in at the door and if we do not rise, but repulse Him coldly, He says, I must, I will come in. He weeps over us till His tears win us! He cries after us till His cries prevailand at last, in His own welldetermined hour, He enters into our heart and there He dwells. I must abide at your house, says Jesus.

VIII. And now, lastly, this call was an effectual one, for we see the fruits it brought forth. Open was Zaccheus door, spread was his table, generous was his heart, washed were his hands, unburdened was his conscience, joyful was his soul! Here, Lord, he said, the half of my goods I give to the poor. I dare say I have robbed them of half my propertyand now I restore it. And if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I will restore it to him fourfold. Away goes another portion of his property! Ah, Zaccheus, you will go to bed tonight a great deal poorer than when you got up this morningbut infinitely richer, too! Poor, very poor, in this worlds goods, compared with what you were when you first climbed that sycamore tree. But richerinfinitely richer in heavenly treasure! Sinner, we shall know whether God calls you by thisif He calls, it will be an Effectual Callnot a call which you hear and then forgetbut one which produces good works! If God has called you this morning, down will go that drunken cup, up will go your prayers! If God has called you this morning, there will not be

one shutter down today in your shop, but all and you will have a notice stuck up, This house is closed on the Sabbath-Day and will not again on that day, be opened. Tomorrow there will be such-and-such worldly amusement but if God has called you, you will not go! And if you have robbed anybody, (and who knows but I may have a thief, here), if God calls you, there will be a restoration of what you have stolenyou will give up all that you haveso that you will follow God with all your heart! We do not believe a man to be converted unless he does renounce the error of his waysunless, practically, he is brought to know that Christ, Himself, is Master of his conscience and His Law is his delight! Zaccheus, make haste and come down; I must abide at your house. And he made haste and came down and Jesus received him joyfully. And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Now, one or two lessons. A lesson to the proud. Come down, proud heart, come down! Mercy runs in valleys, but it goes not to the mountaintop. Come down, come down, lofty spirit! The lofty cityHe lays it low even to the ground and then He builds it up. Again, a lesson to the poor despairing soulI am glad to see you in Gods House this morning it is a good sign. I care not what you came for. You heard there was a strange kind of man that preached here, perhaps. Never mind about that. You are all quite as strange as he is! It is necessary that there should be strange men to gather in other strange men. Now, I have a mass of people here. And if I might use a figure, I would compare you to a great heap of ashes, mingled with which are a few steel filings. Now, my sermon, if it is attended with Divine Grace, will be a sort of magnetit will not attract any of the ashesthey will stay just where they arebut it will draw out the steel filings! I have got a Zaccheus there! There is a Mary up there! A John down there, a Sarah, or a William, or a Thomas thereGods chosen onesthey are steel filings in the congregation of ashes and my Gospel, the Gospel of the blessed God, like a great magnet, draws them out of the heap! There they come, there they come! Why? Because there was a magnetic power between the Gospel and their hearts. Ah, poor Sinner, come to Jesus, believe His love, trust His mercy. If you have a desire to comeif you are forcing your way through the ashes to get to Christthen it is because Christ is calling you!

Oh, all of you who know yourselves to be sinnersevery man, woman and child of youyes, you little children (for God has given me some of you to be my wages), do you feel yourselves sinners? Then believe on Jesus and be saved! You have come here from curiosity, many of you. Oh, that you might be met with and saved! I am distressed for you, lest you should sink into Hell. Oh, listen to Christ while He speaks to you! Christ says, Come down. This morning go home and humble yourselves in the sight of God. Go and confess your iniquities that you have sinned against Him. Go home and tell Him that you are a wretch, undone without His Sovereign Grace. Then look to Him, for rest assured He has first looked to you. You say, Sir, oh, I am willing enough to be saved, but I am afraid He is not willing. Stop! Stop! No more of that! Do you know that is part blasphemy? Not quite all. If you were not ignorant, I would tell you that it was full blasphemy! You cannot look to Christ before He has looked to you. If you are willing to be saved, He gave you that will! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved. I trust the Holy Spirit is calling you. Young man up there, young man in the window, make haste! Come down! Old man, sitting in these pews, come down! Merchant in yonder aisle, make haste! Matron and youth, not knowing Christ, oh, may He look at you! Old grandmother, hear the gracious call! And you, young lad, Christ may be looking at youI trust He isand saying to you, Make haste and come down, for today I must abide at your house.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2701 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

JESUS JOYFULLY RECEIVED   
NO. 2701

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 16, 1881.

**Hereceived Him joyfully.   
Luke 19:6.**   
THIS morning [Sermon #1624, Volume 27WELCOME! WELCOME!read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org ] I showed you, dear

Friends, how joyfully Jesus receives sinnershow He welcomes them how glad He is to find those whom He came to seek and to save. From this text it appears that when sinners receive Jesus, they receive Him joyfully, so that there is joy on both sides. It is a joyful business altogetherthe Savior is glad to save and the sinner is glad to be saved! I know which of the two has the greater joy, for it is always more blessed to give than to receive, and the great heart of Jesus, in its Infinite Benevolence, is conscious of a rarer joy than even the saved sinner can experience. It is a delight to Him to save. So great is His joy that He cannot contain it all within His own heart and He represents Himself as calling together His friends and neighbors, and saying to them, Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost.

And when the two seas meetthe sea of the saved ones gladness and the sea of the Saviors joywhat blessed floods they make! How the dancing waves clap their hands with delight! Surely, joy on earth then becomes more than on any other occasion parallel with the joy in Heaven. Such joy before the Lord is according to the joy in harvest. And such days are as the days of Heaven upon the earth. How earnestly, then, you and I ought to seek to bring men to Christ! This is the best method of making joy in this sin-cursed world. This is the surest way of plucking up the thorns and the thistles that sin has sown and of making the myrtle and the rose to grow instead, according to that ancient promiseYou 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 handseven before you who are the means of reconciling men to their Maker, and of bringing sinners to their Savior!

This joyous time of receiving Christ is the turning point in character, and it is also one of the tests of destiny. By this sign shall you discern between the men predestinated unto eternal life and those who have no share in the Divine decree. He that receives Christ thereby proves that he is Christs, but he that receives Him not shall surely perish as the result of his willful rejection of the Savior. The Gospel is, after all, the great fan that winnows the chaff from the wheat. It separates the precious from the vile, even as Christ said to the Jews, You believe not, because you are not of My sheep. Whether or not you will receive Christ when He comes your way is the all-important matter for each one of you to decide. If your door is shut when He is passing by, He may never come your way again. But if, when He bids you come to Him, as He bade Zacchaeus make haste and come down, you receive Him with alacrity, opening the door of your heart that He may enter in, then shall you prove that you are His, that you are among those who are the blessed of the Lord, and who shall be blessed, world without end! So this matter of the reception of Christ is, as I called it just now, all-importantand I want to press it upon each unsaved person here with the urgent desire and the confident hope that some, like Zacchaeus, will joyfully receive Christ.

This passage also teaches us that often the most unlikely persons are the first to receive the Savior. I would have said, and you would all have agreed with me, that the least likely person in the city of Jericho to receive Christ into his house was this rich little tax-gatherer, Zacchaeus this man whom all the people disliked so much, that when Christ went to his house, they all murmured, saying, that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. Yet he was the one person in that place who did entertain the Lord Jesus Christ! And many a time since has Christ been shut out of good mens doors, or the doors of those who have reckoned themselves as good menbut He has found shelter within the gates of sinners, and such sinners as have been reputed among men to be utterly given over and hopeless. I would not pick my congregation even if I might do soI would much rather that they should come, as they do come, by Gods choice and constraint. For the man whom I might think most likely to be blessed would probably pass the blessing by, and he whom we, in our poor, feeble judgment, might expect to be the last to receive the Savior, might turn out to be the first, the most willing and the most joyful receiver of Him! I cannot tell, therefore, who among you will take the Savior in. I wish I could hope that all who have not yet done so, would do it before the sermon ends. He is such a wondrous Guest that you may all entertain Him at the same moment! And He can come to each ones heartHe may be the Guest of everyone who is a sinner, and yet each sinner who receives Him shall find that a whole Christ has come into his heart!

Let me also add that sometimes very strange motives may bring people where they will be led to receive the Savior. I need not allude to Zacchaeus climbing the sycamore tree, or only just allude to it in passing, but many a person has come into the House of God out of the idlest curiosity, or to oblige a friend, or to while away an hour. Rowland Hill used to say that there were some people who made a cloak of religionand when they ran into Surrey Chapel, on a wet day, to shelter from the rain, he used to add, and there are some who make an umbrella of it. It is still sopeople are influenced by all sorts of motivesharmless motives, vain motives, foolish motives, even condemnable motives have brought persons where Jesus Christ has been passing by! And they have been the occasion of Christs entering into hearts which otherwise had been closed to Him. It may be so with some of you who are here. Perhaps you hardly expected to be here and you scarcely know why you came. Yet it was written in the Book of Destiny that this night you should either accept Christ as your Savior, or you should be willfully guilty of shutting the door of your heart in His face! God grant that it may not be that latter action, but may you say to Him, Come in, blessed Savior. Let salvation come, in Your Person, to my house and heart this very hourthen will I rejoice while You shall rejoice also.

Thus have I introduced to you the textHe received Him joyfully. Now I want to say to you, with regard to the reception of the Savior, that He is not here corporeally or physically, for He has gone back into Glory, to sit at the right hand of the Father. But He is here spiritually according to His promise, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. He enters freely into mens hearts, but He cannot now be received corporeally into your houses, nor can He sit at your tables and partake of your feasts. But He can, by His Spirit, enter into your hearts and He can spiritually dwell there, and make a temple of your bodies, and reign there, finding a happy abode within your renewed nature.

I. Now, if you would receive Him, I wish to call your attention, first, to the fact that, in order to salvation, THERE MUST BE A PERSONAL RECEPTION OF A PERSONAL CHRIST. He received Him joyfully. There you have two persons both present. Hethat is, Zacchaeusreceived Himthat is, Christjoyfully. That looks very simple, yet there is a great depth of the Truth of God in it, as I will try to show you.

For, first, there are some persons who suppose that in order to be saved, they are to receive a creed. That is quite true. You are to have a creed and I urge you to take heed what you believe. Go to the Law and to the Testimony and believe nothing but what is in the Word of God. But I pray you to also remember that a man may receive the most sound creed in Christendomand yet be damned! He may believe, as a matter of head knowledge, all that should be believed. And yet, for all that, he may not believe anything with his heart, and so may perish. I believe that the devil is orthodox. In all that he says, he usually seems to propound either the Truth of God or something which shows that he knows what the Truth is, yet, though in that sense, he believes, and even goes as far as trembling, the devil is not changed in heart, nor will he be saved by what he believes! It is not receiving a creed which saves youit is receiving a Person into your hearts love. It is not written in our text, He received it, but, He received Him. Mark thatHe received Him joyfully.

Again, salvation comes not through receiving an ordinance, or ordinances, however correct or Scriptural they may be. It is not said, Zacchaeus received baptism, or, Zacchaeus received the communion. I do not doubt that Zacchaeus did receive both ordinances, but it was not said to him, This day is salvation come to your house because you have received the sacraments. No! Salvation came to him when he received Christ, when that blessed and Divine Person crossed the threshold of his heart and was welcomed as He installed Himself in the affections of the rich tax-gatherer. It was then that he was saved and, Beloved, if you are to be saved, Christ must come in a similar fashion into your understandings and your hearts. Salvation comes not through ordinances, however Scripturally and correctly they may be observedit is Christ, and Christ alone, who can save your soul! It must be with you as it was with Zacchaeus when he received Him joyfully.

Furthermore, it was not even the Doctrine of Christ that Zacchaeus, on this occasion, received, though he did receive the Doctrine of Christ, and learned of Christ, and became His disciple. But, first, he received Christ, and then he received Christianity. Beware, I pray you, of being like many nominal Christians who know not Christ! Beware of that Christianity from which Christ has been eliminated! You must first receive the Master, or else it is idle to be associated with His servants. You may say that you belong to His Church, but if you are not joined to the Head, what will it avail you to claim to be in the body? If you are not vitally united to the Lord so as to become one spirit with Him, of what service will it be to you that you are reckoned among His followers and that your names are written on an earthly church roll? Zacchaeus received Christ Himselfand this is the all-important saving matterhe received Him.

How did he receive Him? He received Christ as his Guest and entertained Him. Will you so receive Christgiving Him your heart, your love, yourselfletting Him come and find meat and drink for His love within your souls? I beg you to admit Him thus. Behold, He stands at the door of your heart and knocksagain, and again, and again, with gentle hand knocking at the door, does He seek an entrance. Oh, open your heart to Him and let Him be your Guest this very hour!

But, further, Zacchaeus received Christ as his Lord. Notice what he said. Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. That is the way in which you also must receive Christ as your Master and Lord.

In so doing, Zacchaeus also admitted Christ as His Savior, for Jesus said, This day is salvation come to this house. You will think it strange, but I have known some who have called Jesus, Lord, who have not acknowledged Him as their Savior. Thank God it is changed with them, now, but I did know some who came to this house who honored and worshipped Christ according to the light they hadyet they did not understand their need of Him, nor did they accept Him as their Savior. As I said, just now, this has all been changed with them, and so must it be with any of you who would truly receive Christ. If you do not accept Him in His Character as Savior, you virtually reject Him altogether, since He can never be separated from the merit of His blood, and the love of His heart towards guilty sinners. What? Would you have an unwounded Christan unbleeding Christa Christ that never died for men? There is no such Christ as that except in fiction! The Christ of reality is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And in that Character He must be received by us if He is received at all.

II. Now I press on to notice that THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST, TO BE REAL, MUST IN EVERY CASE BE VOLUNTARY. Willingly, Zacchaeus made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. That joyful reception of Christ shows the willingness of Zacchaeus. It proves how cheerfully, how gladly, how willinglythe words all carry the same sensehow joyfully, with the full freedom of his will, he received the Savior.

Observe that the call of Grace does not hinder this willing reception. There was a previous call of GraceZacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at your house. But, although that call was graciously powerful and, in a Gospel sense, irresistible, yet it did not interfere with the free agency of Zacchaeus so as to make him unwillingly receive the Savior. No, he cheerfully, joyfully, received Christ as the result of that call. Here is where many people make a great mistake. They fancy that we who preach effectual calling, make out that men are like logs of wood or carved imagesand things that are dragged or drawn about without any reference to their own will. We teach nothing of the kind! We preach that men are intelligent, responsible agents and that the Omnipotent Grace of God, in which we firmly believe, and our belief in which we are never ashamed to declarenevertheless exerts itself in a way and manner suitable to the free agency of these human beings, so that Grace gets the victory. But, at the same time, a man acts as a man!

Zacchaeus is not dragged down from the tree by an angel who lays hold of the nape of his neck and throws him down against his will. And the door of his house does not open by magic, but the man comes down from the tree, in the ordinary way, by the exercise of his own will and power and he opens the door of his home for Christ to enter. Yet, secretly, in his heart there was a power other than his own which was moving him to act as he did. This may not be easy to understand, or to explain in words, but it is easy enough in actual life! It is plainly seen in the lives of those who are converted to Christ. Nobody will say that Zacchaeus did not as freely let Christ into his house just as he had performed any action in his life. In fact, he never had put so much heart into anything he had ever done as he did into that act of receiving Christ. He made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. He was glad to do it! He cheerfully yielded obedience to the Divine command!

And, dear Friends, you and I must receive Christ cheerfully, willingly, voluntarily, or else we have not really received Him at all. Christ will not force Himself into any mans house and sit there against the mans will. That would not be the action of a guest, but of an unwelcome intruder! Christ will not come in, as it were, mailed and armed, to forcibly take possession of any mans soul! What He does is gently change the bias of our will so that we willingly invite Him to enter our heart. We constrain Him to come in and to dwell with us! We say to Him, Abide with us, and not only are we willing to have Christ, but we are anxious and desirous to have Him. To get Him, we would, if necessary, sell all that we have! To keep Him, we would lay down our very lives, for that which once seemed undesirable to us is now the height of our ambition, the very core and center of our highest desire! He made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. His whole heart went with his reception of Christ.

What do you say, dear Friend? Will you now receive Christ joyfully? Will you willingly receive Him? I know you will if you truly feel your need of Him and if you realize how exactly He meets that need. I know you will gladly receive Him if you understand what blessings come in His train what wealth of happiness and joy He gives to the heart in which He condescends to dwell! You will say to Him, My Lord, I repent most sorrowfully that I ever resisted You and, made willing in the day of Your power, I fling open the doors of my heart and cry, Come in! Come in, come in! Dwell with me from now on and go no more out forever.

After Christ has been received into the heart,

everything else will have to be done cheerfully and voluntarily. He did not command Zacchaeus to give the half of his goods to the poor, but, spontaneously, as soon as Christ came in, Zacchaeus said, of his own accord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. No ordinance to this effect had proceeded from the Saviors lipsZacchaeus, you must restore fourfold to all whom you have wronged. No, but gladly, out of the fullness of his renewed heart, he freely said, If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. This is the very essence of true religionit is cheerful voluntariness. When a man who professes to be a Christian, begins to ask, Must I do this? or Must I do that?He makes us stand in doubt concerning him. Believers in Christ are not under the Law, but under Grace. The principle that rules us is not, Must I? but, May I? It becomes to the Believer a joy and a delight to serve Christ! He is not flogged to his duty. The slave-drivers whip and the stocks are not for the freeborn citizens of the New Jerusalem!

These things are for men of the world who will do nothing unless they are paid for it, one way or the other. The dread of Hell, or the hope of Heaventhese are the only motives that they recognize. But those who receive Christ dread no Hell, for they know that they can never go there! He that believes on Him is not condemned. Such a man works not to obtain Heavenwhy should He? Heaven is already his! In Christ Jesus it is given to Him by a Covenant which cannot be broken. So now he sings

*Loved of my God, for Him again   
With love intense I burn!   
Chosen of You ere time began,   
I choose You in return!*

And this blessed voluntariness, this joyous freedom of the will conferred by Sovereign Grace becomes the very life and soul of vital godliness! Do you possess it, dear Friend? If not, may God the Holy Spirit speedily give it to you! If you have it, may He nurture it and make it to increase within you, and so, like Zacchaeus, whatever you do, you may do it joyfully, cheerfully, as unto the Lord!

III. This brings me now to close with my third remark, which is, that THE RECEPTION WHICH WE GIVE TO CHRIST MAY WELL BE A JOYFUL ONE.

To receive Christ into the heart, dear Brothers and Sistersought not that to be as glad a thing as for a man to welcome his long-desired bride, or his firstborn child, or to receive his estate when he comes to the ripeness of manhood? Yes, more than that! Ought it not to be as much joy to receive Christ as to receive Heaven, itself, for would there be any Heaven possible if we had not first received Christ? Ring the bells of Heaven and ring them yet again, for a soul has received Christ Jesus the Lord! It is the most joyous event on earth and it gives even new joy in Heaven. See how the angels fly upward from their various watching places to tell their brethren on yonder battlements that they may publish it in every golden street, Another sinner has received Christ. Joy, joy forever! These are the things that make jubilees in Heaven! When sinners receive their Savior, they make glad rejoicing before the face of the Highest, Himself.

If I hear that a certain persons reception of Christ had not much gladness in it, I am not necessarily led to suspect the reality of it, though I wish he had received Christ joyfully. When men receive the Word with gladness, if it is nothing but the bare Word, I can understand that they may be like the rocky ground which received the good seed. But, after a while, for lack of depth and moisture, the ground yielded not life enough or nourishment enough for the seed, so it withered away. But it is different when, instead of, it, you read, Him. He received Him joyfully. That is another matter altogether, for, if Christ is received into the soul, He will not die. If Jesus is taken into the heart, He will not disappear and go His way. But where He once comes, He abides forever! So, let us have as much joy as we can connected with our conversion and let us not, because of that gladness, question its genuineness, but let us rather be all the more sure that it is a true work of Christs Grace because, like Zacchaeus, we have received Christ joyfully!

Think what joy there ought to be in the heart that receives Christ into it. First of all, what an honor it is! O poor lowly woman, or humble man, will the Lord of Glory really come and dwell in you? You are no queen, or prince, or philosopherwill the great Lord of All dwell in your frail body which is undecorated by costly dress, perhaps unadorned by natural beauty? Has He indeed come down to dwell with you? Then, you are indeed honored even above the angels, for we never read that Christ dwells in them! You ought to be indeed glad that the Lord has permitted you to receive such an honor as this.

Then, next, where Jesus comes into the heart, He comes to put away all sin. Wherever Jesus is received, all the guilt of the past is blotted out and gone, never to be remembered anymore. When you receive Christ, you receive full remission of all your sinevery transgression goes into complete oblivion! Just think of that, and tell me if it is not a joyous thing to receive Christ! Will you not, then, like Zacchaeus, receive Christ joyfully?

When you receive Christ, you also receive the fountain of inward purity, the well-spring of cleansing which shall overflow unto ultimate perfection. Receiving Christ, sin gets its death warrant. Every buyer and seller in the temple of your nature will have to go! Everything received by false accusation will have to be given up. Where Jesus comes, the devil flies away and angels come in with all their blessed train of beauty and holiness. To receive Christ is to drive out Hell and to let in Heavenit is to end the darkness and to begin the everlasting day. Then, shall we not receive Him joyfully?

Let me come close to you and whisper a little secret in your ear. Zacchaeus did not know it and the parallel does not hold good with his case, but it does with ours. There is great cause for joy in receiving Christ, because He will never go away again. When He once comes into our heart, He claims the freehold of it and, by a Divine entail, holds possession of it against all comers even to the end. I am not one of those who believe that a man can be a child of God, today, and a child of the devil tomorrow. Ah, no! When Christ, the strong Man armed, does really take possession of the heart, a stronger than He must come if He is to be driven outand there is no one stronger than He is! Hell itself can find no power to match the might of Him who died to save His people from their sins! And you may depend upon it that He will fight for His own and preserve His own even until He comes to take them to be with Him forever! Therefore, be glad when Jesus comes into your heart, for it means salvation for you even unto the end.

And, further, it also means eternal glory, for He who thus comes into your heart is the same Savior who prayed, 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. Oh, yes! He will bring you safely home to Glory. Admit Him and He will keep you here as His own until such a day as it shall please Himand then He will gently waft your soul away to the better land where, transformed, and rendered white as snow, He will still dwell in you and walk in you, and you shall be His people, and He will be your God! Oh, the bliss of admitting Christ into the heart and life! There is nothing like it under Heaven and even Heaven, itself, can show nothing better than the joy of receiving Christ into ones inmost heart, for that is, indeed, Heaven begun below!

So I will finish my discourse by begging all of you who are gathered together here, if you have never yet received Christ, to receive Him now. Perhaps someone enquires, How can we receive Him? Well, first, open the door which has hitherto been closed. Be willing that He should come into your heart, to rule your whole life. Next, stand at the door and invite Him to come in. By earnest prayer, entreat Him to enter. Then, believe in Himthat is really to receive Him, as John says, As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. So that believing on Him is receiving Him. It is trusting Him. You know what it is to trust yourself wholly to the care of another. Just as you might, on some dark night, when you had lost your way on the moor, trust yourself entirely with a guide who knew the way, even so trust yourself with Christ to lead you to His Father, and He will do it. You have received Him when you have trusted Him! O dear Hearts, do receive my Master! Blessed Spirit, lead them to do so, and to do so at once!

I admire Zacchaeus very much for one thing in which he differed from a good many of you. You ask such a lot of questions and when you get them answered, or if they are not answered, you ask so many more. If Zacchaeus had been like you, I can imagine how he would have sat up in that sycamore tree, and when Christ called out to him, Make haste, and come down, He would have said, But \_\_\_\_. And Jesus would have listened, and heard what he had to say, and answered him. Then he would have said again, But, Lord \_\_\_\_. And there he might have stayed up in that sycamore tree and no blessing would have come to him! There are so many of you who have been, as it were, up a sycamore tree for years! You always want to know more than you will ever know. You seem to be very clever at picking holes in the Gospelyou have wonderful skill in the art of trying how you can damn yourselvesand you will do it, one of these days, unless God should prevents you by His almighty Grace!

If you can, you even spoil the precious promises of Scripture. You lay hold of one of Gods golden coins and try to deface it. I mean that you take His promise and then seek to get the very life and soul out of itnot that you may claim it for yourself, but in order to show that it does not belong to you! I never yet heard of a man going to the law to prove that a fortune was

not his. Men are eager enough to get temporal things, but when you come to spiritual things, there are thousands of people who seem only anxious to prove that they can never be saved! If I were in your place, I would let the devil do that kind of work if he liked, it is very much to his taste, but, as for you, do not have even a little finger in it!

Look at Zacchaeus. I can see him. As soon as ever Christ says to him, Come down, why, dear me, the man is down before we can utter another word! And soon he is at the door of his house and saying to the Master, Come in, Lord, come in! Heartily do I welcome You! Now, thengo and do likewiseask no more questions, but make haste, and come down, and receive Christ joyfully. But I want to know this. You shall know it when you have received Christ. But am I one of His elect? I will answer your question as soon as you receive Him. A good Wesleyan brother said to a Calvinistic friend down in Cornwall, Now, Malachi, I owe you these two pounds, but, before I pay you, you must tell me whether you are predestinated to have them. Malachi said, Just put the two pounds here, in the middle of my hand, and I will tell you directly.

That was very sensible on the part of Malachi and I say to youDo not be asking about predestination or anything else, but just receive Christ! And when you have accepted Him, you may rest assured that He has given you power to become a son of God! You have believed on His name and, therefore, you are saved! That is the all-important point. So, like Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down, and receive Christ joyfully! The Lord grant that you may do it and unto His name shall be the praise forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**LUKE 19:1-27.**

Verses 1, 2. And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. Many of those tax-gatherers were rich. They usually farmed the taxes, and took care to extort all that they possibly could out of the poverty of the people.

3. And he sought to see Jesus who He was. He did not seek to hear Himhis curiosity lay in another directionhe desired to see Him. Who could this Man be who created such a stir? What kind of Man was He?

3-5. And could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him. Zacchaeus went up into the sycamore tree that he might see Jesus, but he was, himself, seen there by Jesus. And that, dear Friends, is the first act in the process of salvation! Jesus looks at us and then we look at Him. So, here, the Lord spied out Zacchaeus up among the branches of the treeHe looked up, and saw him.

5. And said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at your house. His surprise at receiving such a message must have been overwhelming, yet he did not allow that surprise to delay his obedience to Christs command.

6, 7. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. This professedly superior Teacher, this Purist, this Teacher of the highest morality has gone to be guest with this tax gatherera man who is a sort of outlaw, a disreputable person altogether. Ah, how does the legal spirit in self-righteous men cry out against the sweet benevolence of our blessed Master who comes into the world for this very purposeto be the Guest of sinners, that He may be the Physician of sinners!

8. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. There was not one among those selfrighteous people who would have done a tenth as much as Zacchaeus declared that he would do!

8. And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. There was not one among the murmurers who would have dared to say as much as that! There are a great many people who are quick to condemn those who are a hundred times better than themselves. I wonder whether there are any people of that sort here? I should not wonder if there are.

9. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, for as much as he is also a son of Abraham. When our Lord was here, His personal mission as a Soul-Winner was to the Jews, to those who were of the house of Abraham. So He shows that however much despised this man might be, he came within the compass of the Christs immediate missionfor as much as he is also a son of Abraham.

10, 11. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, He added and spoke a parable, because He was near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. Some of them dreamt of a temporal sovereignty with Christ at its head, so He taught them that His Kingdom was something very different from that.

12, 13. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. Use these pounds on my account. Be stewards of them for me until I return.

14-16. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, your pound has gained ten pounds. He was a modest man. He did not say, I have gained ten pounds, but, Your pound has gained ten pounds. And if God has blessed anyone so as to enable him to bring in a large result from the talent entrusted to him, he must ascribe it all to God, and not to himselfLord, Your pound has gained ten pounds.

17-19. And he said unto him, Well, you good servant: because you have been faithful in a very little, have you authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, your pound has gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be you also over five cities. Observe that, whatever the triumph of Christ is to be, His faithful servants are to share in it. He is to be the King of the many cities in the rich provinces of His Fathers domain, but He will give to one of His servants ten cities, and to another five cities. But what a vast dominion that must be out of which He can afford to give such rewards as this! Ten citiescan any earthly king give in this fashion? There are royal rewards at the last for those who are faithful now. No pitiful pence shall fall to the lot of those who diligently serve the Lord Christthey shall have a rich reward, not of debt, but of Grace and, therefore, all the larger!

20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is your pound, which I have kept laid up, in a napkin. He had not lost it, he had not spent it, he had not even dug a hole in the earth and hidden ithe had used a nice piece of linen to wrap it in and had taken great care of it. And there it was, just as when he received it. It had not diminished, neither had it grown at all.

21. For I feared you, because you are an austere man: you take up that you laid not down, and reap that you did not sow. So there is a slavish kind of fear, a dread, a horror of God which will keep men out of His service. It ought not legitimately to do so, but, undoubtedly, there are some persons who, out of an evil timidity, are afraid to attempt anything for God or man, and hence their life is useless. Their talent cankers and rusts in the napkin in which they have wrapped it.

22. And he said unto him, Out of your own mouth will I judge you, you wicked servant! You knew that I was an austere man. That was your opinion. According to your own confession, that was your idea concerning meYou knew that I was an austere man.

22, 23. Taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: why then gave not you my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required my own with usury? With proper interest. God does not trouble about clearing His Character with ungodly men. You and I are very particular and punctilious in defending ourselves against false accusations, but Gods Character needs no clearing. It is so transparent that if ungodly men choose to smear it, He argues with them on their own ground, and does not stay to answer their slanders. When I have heard people say of God that He is unjust or too severe, all I have felt inclined to say in reply was just this, Whatever He may be, He is the God who will judge you at the last. And if you think thus of Him, so much the more ought you to yield yourself to Him and submit to His infinite majesty, for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. It is an ill day when we attempt to be the judge of our Judge, and pretend to be the god of God. He is infinitely glorious, so let us bow before Him!

24-26. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that has ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he has ten pounds). For I say unto you, that unto everyone which has shall be given; and from him that has not, even what he has shall be taken away from him. They who have some already shall have more, especially in the matter of Grace. If you serve God well, He will give you more to do. If you love Him ardently, He will reward you by enabling you to have more love to Him. And if you exercise great faith, He will give you yet more faith. The way to be truly enriched, spiritually, is to be faithful to God in what we have.

27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me. Whatever these words mean, it is certain that there is a terrible doom in store for all who are Gods enemies! May none of us be found among them!

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THE HONORED GUEST   
NO. 3487

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1915. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
And he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. Luke 19:6.

ARE YOU prepared, like Zaccheus, to give the Lord Jesus Christ a glad and grateful welcome? If we would obtain the full benefit of His devoted life, His atoning death and His triumphant Resurrection, we must receive Him into our hearts by simple faith and entertain Him with tender love. Outside the door of our heart, Jesus is a strangerHe is no Savior to usbut inside the heart which has been opened, by Divine Grace, to admit Him, His power is displayed, His worth is known and His goodness is felt! My dear Hearers, you have heard of His fame, you have witnessed the miracles He has worked upon others and now it remains that you receive Him, yourself, to ensure your own well-being. He stands at the door and knocks! You must open to Him. The promise is, If any man will open unto Me, I will come in and sup with him. To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. Not upon all who heard was the privilege conferred, for many, when they heard, did not believe. Alas, they provoked Him, and so they perished in their sins! But those who hail Jesus as a Friend, salute Him as an honored Guest, sit at His feet, hang on His lips and find how He lights every chamber of their soul with joy, satisfies every craving of their better nature and enriches them with all the endowments of adopted children!

In many respects Zaccheus supplies us with a noble example. He shows us how to receive the Savior. You will observe that he received Him speedily. He made haste and came down. It is not always easy to come down from a tree with great speed. He came down, however, as fast as he could. There was no hesitancy in his manner. I daresay his heart was down before his feet! In like manner they who would receive Christ must receive Him now. This is not a call or a counsel to be trifled with. The procrastination of Felix, which led him to say, When I have a more convenient season I will send for You, is a very dangerous spirit. Let those who talked as Felix talked beware lest they perish as Felix perished! Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Zaccheus made haste. They who receive Christ heartily must receive Christ immediately!

We notice, too, that Zaccheus received the Lord obediently. When the Master said, Make haste, he made haste. Hardly had He said, Come down, when down he came. If you, my Hearers, be likewise willing and obedient, you shall eat of the good of the land. Christ likes us to be obedient to Him, though He speaks to us less as a Lawgiver than as a Savior and a Friend. If we refuse to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, how can we reasonably expect to find rest unto our souls? The words of Jesus must be deeply respected and diligently observed by those who would have Him for their Rock, their Refuge and their Hiding Place. Let Him be your Counselor if you want to partake of His redemption! Render allegiance to Him as your King if you would enjoy all the Grace of His priestly mediation and intercession!

There was also a thorough heartiness on the part of Zaccheus in receiving Christ. He made a great feast for Him. He did not admit Him as one who intruded. It was not with cold civility, but with cordial hospitality that he greeted Him. I think I see the satisfaction that sparkled in his face! I think I hear the salutation that leaped from his tongue, Come income in, my gracious Lord! Never did my house entertain so welcome a guest as You are! Would you receive Christ, you must throw the doors of your heart wide open! Then your eyes, your lipsevery muscle of your body will express your earnestness. Your whole spirit, soul and strength will be stirred to enthusiasm if you know His worth and feel the honor He confers on you. A man who finds a treasure hid in a field will congratulate himself on his good fortune. A woman, when she embraces her firstborn child, will dote on him with exquisite fondness. Shall no strong emotions prove our sincerity when we receive the Lord of Life and Glory?

And mark you, too, this Chief of the Publicans received Christ spiritually. His convictions were in keeping with his conduct. When he distributed his goods to the poor, and made a bold confession of his faith before his fellow men, there was proof positive that Christ had not only crossed the threshold of Zaccheus house, but had also penetrated the chambers of his heart! Ah, Beloved, it is useless to receive Christ nominally, professionally, ceremonially, or with rites and ceremonies, to do Him empty homage! By a sincere reception of Him who was sent of God, your nature, your disposition and your habits will be transformed from what they were, and conformed to what He isand the change will be conspicuous, for if you are in Christ, and Christ is in you, all will become new!

A prominent feature, however, so distinctly stated that it should not be carelessly overlooked was this, that he received Him joyfully. This was crowning evidence of the purity of his motives and the artlessness of his actions. In such mirth there could be no guile. Ask now, Why do not all men thus receive Jesus Christ joyfully? How is it that some men receive Him with such exuberant joy? In what ways do those show their joy who have thus received the Master?

I. WHY IS IT THAT ALL MEN DO NOT RECEIVE CHRIST JOYFULLY? This is our first question. They need Him, all of them. There is no difference in this respect. Whether Jews or Gentiles, they are all sold under sin. God has concluded the whole race of man in unbelief. He has shut them all up in condemnation! There is no escape from the universal

doom except by the way of the Cross. Jesus Christ comes to savecomes with pardon in His hands, with messages of love, with tokens of favor yet most men bar the doors of their hearts against Him! There is no cry heard in their souls, Lift up your head, O you gates! And be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in! Instead thereof, there is a sullen cry, Come prejudice! Come unbelief! Come hardness of heart! Come love of sinbar the doors and barricade the gates lest, perhaps, the King of Glory should force an entrance! Men treat the Savior as they would treat an invader who attacked their country! They seek to drive Him away! They would gladly be rid of Him. They cannot endure His Presence. No, they can scarcely endure, some of them, to hear about Him in the street! Why is this? The chief reason lies in the depravity of mans nature. You never know how bad man is till he comes in contact with the Cross!

Although the crimes of savage, uncivilized men may appear to you far more heinous than any that are committed in our favored country where just laws are, for the most part, enacted, and opportunities of education generally enjoyed, yet the propensity to do that which is evil in the teeth of a knowledge of that which is good, the subtlety of perverting the Truth of God in the clear light of Divine Revelation, the faithlessness of that foul ingratitude which can betray the most tender friendship, are never so painfully illustrated as in view of the Crucified! To despise the name of Jesus, to reject the love of God, to conspire against the Ambassador of Peace, to take the inhuman, devilish counselThis is the heir; let us kill Him!this was the last offense of the wicked husbandmen in the parable. Nor does the parable exaggerate the treachery. For this is the greatest offense of human nature, when it says, in effect, This is the Incarnate God, let us reject Him. This is the Word made flesh, let us disgrace Him. This is the Fathers beloved Sonlet us betray Him! Oh, Human Nature, how blind must be your heart, how seared your conscience not to see the beauties of Christ! How base must you be to despise the love and tenderness of such a Savior!

Were we to select secondary causes, however, which spring out of this deep-seated depravity and discriminate between the various classes of offenders, we would say that many men reject Christ instead of receiving Him joyfully out of sheer ignorance. For this ignorance there is not much valid excuse. There are thousands of persons, even in this highly-favored, greatly-enlightened country, who really do not know what the Gospel means! The knowledge of salvation is within their reach, but they have no desire to acquaint themselves with this best of all the sciences. We are all sinners, they say, but they do not know what they mean. In the jargon of general confession, they lose sight of their own personal transgressions. The plan of salvation by a Substitute, which is the gist of the whole matter, never dawned on their understanding. They do not know the great Truth of God that Jesus took our sins and suffered for us in our place that justice might be satisfied, that mercy might be magnified and that we sinners might be liberated and, therefore, it comes to pass that whoever trusts in Christ is saved! Being ignorant of this, they are still depending upon their own works, merits and professionsor they are relying upon their baptism, their confirmation, or their identification with some ecclesiastical system by means of some outward ceremony instead of understanding that salvation is by faith, a thing of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter. This ignorance of the blessed Savior prevents many from receiving Him joyfully. So was it with the woman of Samariahence the Savior said to her, If you had known the gift of God and who it is that speaks to you, you would have asked, and He would have given you living water. Lest you perish through lack of knowledge, Brothers and Sisters, do entreat the Lord to guide you in the reading of Scripture, and in listening to the exposition of Scripture, that you may get a clear understanding of the way of the Lord. That the soul should be without knowledge is not good, for ignorance is the parent of many infatuations!

To refuse attention, to resist evidence, to rebut exhortation in the instance of full many, exhibits a spirit of gross unbelief. They will not believe in Jesus. They will not acknowledge Him to be the Son of Godthey will scarcely believe that the Man ever lived who had a right to the homage which His few disciples offered Him! The Atonement they look upon as an old wives tale and they account the Resurrection from the dead as an idle dream! I will say but little of their excuse. They are not open to conviction. They live in darkness because they have barred every window of their soul against the Light of God. The precious Doctrine of Christ bears on its face the genuine stamp. Its authenticity is engraved upon its very forefront. Their stolid disputations cannot diminish its value or its virtue. They wrong themselves when they denounce or disparage the Truth of God as it is in Christ.

Others are actuated by a positive aversion to the Savior. They have no sinister reflections to cast on the story of His life, the purity of His manners, the holiness of His Character, or the benevolence of His mission but they do not desire to be saved from their sinsthey rather enjoy reveling, unrebuked and undisturbed, in the gratification of their own sensual propensities! They do not want to be saved from drunkenness! They would rather go on with the drink. They do not want to be saved from the lusts of the fleshthey would sooner pamper its gross appetites! They do not want to be saved from pride or self-confidencethey would rather indulge their towering ambition! They do not want, in fact, to have a divorce proclaimed between them and their sinsthey would sooner discard the high obligations of the Divine Law and act upon the expedience of the life that now isthan forego a pursuit or a pleasure in hope of eternal life! Hence they cannot bear the name of Jesus! They recoil from it, unable to conceal their enmity. Religion is not merely insipidit is positively nauseous to them! The singing of a hymn in the house would put them out of temper. Did their wife or their child mention the Cross of Christ, or faith in His precious blood, they would either sneer and ridicule with unseemly jest, or else their temper would boil over with malice and wrath! The Lord pluck that black heart out of you, Man! The Lord give you a new heart and a right spirit! You will have to bend or else to break! If you will not turn, you will burn! If you do not repent of this hatred of Christ, now, you will feel remorse enough for it hereafter. In the day when He comes in the clouds of Heaven to judge the quick and the dead, you will seek in vain to elude His eyes, or escape from His wrath!

You will find that the reason for not receiving Christ in many others is the fact that they are worldly, and eaten up with too many cares. A pitiful apology and very perilous! Such paltry excuses will bring poignant regrets. The hour of death can do little to rectify the years of life misspent. Not then can you seek God, if you have never sought Him before! Oh, you are taken up with the farm and the merchandise, with your daily labors and diversions, your losses and your gains heaping up, not knowing who shall inherit. These canker worms eat up your souls. Would that men were not such fools as to be always providing for this poor tenement of the body, while they neglect the precious jewel it enclosestheir immortal souloccupied with trivial personalities, while reckless of their real estate. They are crying, Buy, buy, in Vanity Fair, while the Lord of Life and Glory passes by! Yet they heed not. Talk of the main chance, but they miss the wise choice. They sell gold for drossthey lose their souls and get Hell!

Still more inexcusable, I think, are those who reject Christ because they are taken up with the worlds frivolities. Some people live in a whirl of fashion where repentance would be accounted vulgar! Not in sportive gaieties, but in pensive solitudes do penitence and contrition find room for exercise. Ridiculous as it may sound, some people are far too genteel to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! He is fit company, in their esteem, for publicans and sinners, but into their drawing rooms, were He to enter, He would soon be expelled! They want Him not in the upper circle of the haut tonneither would He be kindly received in the lower circles, among the frequenters of music halls and dancing saloons. Ah, noas of old, so nowThere is no room for Him in the inn. The world is ready enough to welcome actor, singer, dancer, punster, anyone who can amuse them! But as for Christ, who stands with bleeding hands and cries, Come unto Me and I will give you rest, they despise Him! They miss the soul of beauty for gaudy charms and bubbles! They turn from the source of real joy to indulge in silly laughter! They push away the real and leap after the shadow! They forsake the overflowing fountain and fly to the broken cisterns that can hold no water!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, this is a miserable spectacle! It is a dreary sight to see a sinner despising mercy, a drowning man rejecting the lifebelt, a sick man declining the physician, a man entering the gates of death refusing life and immortality! Oh, Sin, how you have fooled men! How you have made them hate themselves and act cruelly to their own souls! What suicides they commit! What a sacrifice of their noblest nature! They go down to Hell with a verdict of felo de se. O Israel, you have destroyed yourself! You have destroyed yourself! They reject Him shamefully whom they should have received joyfully! They carry out their own will and they perish in their willfulness! And now we ask in the next place

II. WHY DO SOME MEN RECEIVE HIM JOYFULLY?   
The answer is simply because Divine Grace has made them to differ. Grace has subdued their stubborn will, illuminated their darkened understanding, changed their depraved affections and made their whole mind to judge of things after a different fashion. Do not suppose that we who have received Christ were naturally any better disposed to Him than others. Oh, no! If, when the seed was sown, we were like the honest and good ground in which it took root, there had been a previous tillage upon our hearts to make them ready! We would not have been found willing had it not been the day of Gods power! I think we all unite in saying *Twas the same love that spread the feast That sweetly forced us in,   
Else we had still refused to taste   
And perished in our sin.*   
As for the reasons and inducements which prompted us to receive Christ joyfully, I may speak very plainly for myself. I received Christ because I could not help it. I was at my wits ends. I think no man ever flees to Christ for refuge, or seeks shelter in the Port of Gospel Peace until he is quite certain that every other harbor is shut up. We make Christ our last resource! We try everything else. We make grand resolutions to do good works, or to attend gorgeous ceremonies. We try trivial formalities, or paltry superstitionsanythingthe silliest conceit or the emptiest quackery! We go the round of folly before we discover the path of wisdom. At length I must go to Christ, or else woe is unto me if I win Him not! Helpless and hopeless, in sheer distress we cry out, Give me Christ, or else I die. Henceforth He is not merely our choice, but a positive necessity to us to have Him as our hourly, daily and eternal portion! Oh, the strait unto which I was brought when I received Christ! It was Christ or death! Salvation by Christ, or damnation without Him! I received Him because I could not help it. I had no alternative. How many of you are in the same dilemma? How many of you will fly to Him in similar destitution? Driven before the tempest, catching a glimpse of the lighthouse, you cry out

*Jesus, lover of my soul*

*Let me to Your bosom fly.*   
Well may we receive Christ joyfully since He works such wonderful changes in us, and so beneficent! He cheers the grievous past. It was all black and threatening with the memory of our provocations. He sprinkles His blood upon it and now it becomes bright and beaming with mementos of the loving kindnesses and tender mercies of the Lord. He illuminates the present. There was nothing but gloom and black despair till He shone as the Light of Life in our dwelling! Then life and salvation dawn upon us like the dayspring from on high. He disperses the clouds that hung over the future. The outlook was dark and threatening till Jesus came, bright and glorious, and we discovered a hereafter. Beyond the black river of death we now discern the gleaming of the spirit land, and the place of meeting where we shall see His face! Thus, when Jesus comes into the heart, the three realms of the past, the present and the future all glow with the Light of God! When the sun rises, the hills, valleys and rivers, above and beneath, are all sown with orient pearl!

Right joyfully do we receive Christ because He comes into our hearts with such gracious offices. He came as a Priest to put away sin! Who could but be glad? He came as a King! Who would not receive such a Monarch with sound of trumpets and flaunting of banners? He came to us as a Shepherd! Shall not the flock of His pasture be glad of the sight of Him? He came as a dear and tender Frienddoes not His sweet sympathy excite any joy? Think, too, of the yet more endearing relationship in which He came. He came as a Husband and our souls are married unto Him. Blessed Bridegroom! Adorable Savior, You have engrossed our heart and won our love! Does not the bride rejoice when the husband comes home? Is there not gladness in her heart when the nuptial day approaches? Oh, well, well might we welcome Christ when He comes, dressed in such robes and wearing such offices as these! When He came, He came with such wondrous blessingspardon and peace, justification and acceptance, sanctification and honor, wisdom and righteousness all these! And now He proclaims Himself to be our Protector! His paths drop fatness. He makes rich and adds no sorrow. Such as find Him find in Him such wealth of goodnessdeep, mysterious, unknownas far exceeds earthly pleasure, all worldly fortune! Surely on the lowest ground we might afford Him the loftiest welcome! Even churlish Laban received Eliezer with courtesy when he saw the presents he broughtthe bracelets, the earrings and the jewelsand should not we receive Jesus when we mark those costly gifts in His handsthe purchase of His own blood which He freely gives to those who receive Him?

And shall we not receive Him joyfully because He comes in such blessed spirit? He upbraids not. He was all gentleness, meekness, Grace, when here belowthough of Divine pedigreethe Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. Should we not, then, receive Him with sound of the trumpet, with the psalter and harp, yes, and with unspeakable joy of heart? Let me add that the better we know Him, the more joyfully we receive Him for His own sake. Oh, I could stand here and weep to think that I do not speak better of my Lord and Master! Truly I know more of His Grace and goodness than I should ever be able to tell! I trust you can say the same. It is one thing to know the sweetness of His savor, and quite another thing to have to tell that savor to others There is no exaggeration in the language of the spouse when she says, Yes, He is altogether lovely. Such as receive Him with their hearts, will find that the most rapturous expressions that saints have ever used do not exceed, but fall infinitely short of the delight, the heavenly joys, which He brings into the soul! If one might choose a Heaven upon earth, it would be to rest forever in quiet meditation upon the beauties of His Person, the perfection of His Character, the power of His blood, the prevalence of His plea, the Glory of His Resurrection, the majesty of His Second Advent! Everything about Christ is delightful. There is not a Truth of God He ever teaches but is fragrant with choice perfume. There is not a word He utters but smells of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces from which He came!

If you have not received Christ, my dear Hearers, you have missed the brightest feature of Divine Revelation. For a foreigner to visit England and never see the Metropolis of London. For a man to have lived in the world without ever seeing the sun. For one to have beheld tables spread with the most sumptuous provisions, but never to have tasted any of themin any such case there would be little cause for congratulations! So you do not know what life isyou are dead to all its charms. You do not know what light isyou have only dwelt in the shade, or in the twilight at the bestif you have not beheld the Savior, entertained Him, and tasted that He is gracious! You have missed the cream. You have been staying outside in the farmyard feeding with the swine! You do not know what the fatted calf is, upon which the children feed at the Fathers table. You have been a dog, satisfied with the bones, not knowing the fatness and the marrow of true life. But the Christian, dear Friends, finds Christ to be so inconceivably precious, such a fountain of delight, such a river of mercy, that when he receives Him, he receives Him joyfullyand the longer he knows Him, the more joyful he is to think that he ever received Him at all! And now, such being the reasons why some receive Christ joyfully, let us ask

III. HOW DO THEY SHOW IT? IN WHAT WAYS AND BY WHAT MEANS DO THEY EXPRESS THEIR JOY?   
I have known some who have taken very strange ways of showing their joy. They have been inclined to stand up and shout in the very place where they found the Savior, while others could only sit still and water the floor with their tears, feeling as if for the next week or two they did not want to look anybody in the face, but just in solemn silence of the mind to revel in the company of their adorable Lord! We do not wonder that some people show a little strange enthusiasm when they first come to know Christ. It is no marvel. When a man has been in prison for months, he may well be a little demonstrative in his joy on obtaining his libertyso when a soul has been under the burden of sin and bound with its galling chain, he may well leap, as Bunyan tells us his Pilgrim did when the burden was loosed off him and rolled away!   
Yet there are other and better ways of expressing satisfaction and pleasure than these which have much of the flesh, much of the natural disposition about them. Though not to be condemned, still they are not to be commended. A better way of showing that you have received Christ joyfully is by turning out His enemies. When you receive Christ in at the front door, you must not keep the devil in the back parlor! Every traitor sin must be ejected when the Great King takes up His residence in your heart! The thorough cleansing of your house from every defilement is the smallest tribute we can expect you pay in deference to your royal Guest. The soul that receives Christ joyfully, sighs and groans because it cannot make, as it would, a clean sweep of its sin! I know you do not love Christ if you cling to your sins! If you love Christ heartily, you will put away your iniquities  
*The dearest idol I have known,   
Whatever that idol be;   
Help me to tear it from its throne,   
And worship only Thee.*   
And when you do receive Christ joyfully, you will be eager to obey His instructions. Like Zaccheus, you will ask, Lord, what would You have me do? Christ was going to Zaccheus house, and you know what people say when they have a guest they are anxious to please. They entreat him thus, Now just do as you like. Consider yourself at home. Whatever you want, ask for, only tell us what we can do to make you happy, and we shall we glad to do it. This is how every cheerful holy soul deals with Christ. He says, Lord, tell us what You would have me do. Only let me know Your willtell me by Your Word, by Your minister, by Your Holy Spirit! Work in my own heart, personallyteach me Your way, and oh, my God, my heart shall be glad to conform to Your wishes. Have you all done this? Have you been obedient to all the Saviors commands, or have you sought to observe them? If you have, this should be an evidence of your joyfully receiving Him!   
Another proof of our joy in receiving Christ is receiving His people. This, in more ways than one, He has made the test of attachment to Himself. Love one another. Feed My lambs. If you have done it unto one of the least of My brethren, you have done it unto Me. Just as Laban said when he took in Eliezer, There is room for you, and room for the camels, so let there be room in our hearts for Jesus. There will be room for some of these poor troubled ones, these burdened saints. They may not always be pleasant company, but we shall be willing to receive them, and to join with them because of their Master. Now, dear Friends, if you are a Christian, and have received Christ, unite yourselves with His peoplemake a profession of your faith, come out and join the people of Godand do not be ashamed with them to suffer the reproach of Christ.   
And if you have received Christ joyfully, you will love His Cross. I mean not only the Cross which He had to carry, but the cross which you now have to carry for Him. You will count it a great privilege to suffer reproach for His sake. You will love the Cross. No cross, no crown, is an ancient motto, but it is just as true today as it was a thousand years ago! The faith that Moses illustrated, you will follow, counting the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. If you receive the Master in good part, you will say, Come in, my Master! Come in, and bring Your Cross, too, and I will bear it cheerfully, for Your sake.   
Moreover, you will prove the grateful welcome you give Him by wishing that other people may receive Him joyfully, too. I cannot believe you know my Master if you do not wish to make Him known. Were you cured of some sad disease and met with a sufferer as bad as you once were, your tongue would be quick to tell him of the medicine that can cure him. And surely, if you have been saved by Christ from the damning power of sin, you will want to be telling it to the sons of men that there is balm in Gilead and that there is a Physician there! Perhaps you cannot preach. Possibly not half a dozen people might be edified were you to try. But you can talk to a neighbor. You can speak with your children. I was pleased, today, in reading the life of John Wesleys mother, to notice how she set apart Monday to speak to one of her daughters, Tuesday to speak to another, Wednesday to speak, as she says, to Jack, meaning John Wesley, and Thursday to speak to Charlesso that they each had a dayand there was an hour each day given to speak to each child about the affairs of the soul. That is the way to win the children for God! Depend upon it, Reader, the blessing of God, the Holy Spirit, if we experimentally know the joy of religion, ourselves, will be the means of much good to others if we make it a point to tell to sinners round what a dear Savior we have found.   
May the Lord, in His mercy, call you as He called Zaccheus! May many of you receive Him joyfully as Zaccheus did! Seek Him and He shall be found of you. Trust HimHe will not deceive you. Cast your soul upon HimHe will be as good as His Word. Mark His promise, Him who comes unto Me I will in nowise cast out. Faithful is He that gives you this grateful encouragement! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, now, and through countless ages you will look back upon this fleeting hour with unspeakable, perennial joy with gratitude that eternity cannot be exhausted! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MARK 2:1-14.**

Verses 1, 2. And again He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was heard that He was in the house. And immediately many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not even near the door: and He preached the Word unto them. We expect to see the crowd round the door, but there was not room, even for the doorway hearers, when Jesus Christ was preaching! There is an attracting power about the Voice of Jesus. We may expect that if we will let Jesus speak in the ministry, and not speak too much our own thoughts and our own words, there will still be the same attraction about the Gospel. He preached the Word unto them.

3. And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy. A paralyzed personthat is the exact wordone who could not come himself, but had a very anxious desire to come. They came to Him, bringing a paralytic.

3. Which was borne of four. Your neighbors agreed to lift him   
4. And when they could not come near unto Him for the crowdThey had tried the door many times, but could not possibly enter.   
4. They uncovered the roof above where He was. They, perhaps, went up the stairway of the next house, and then from one flat roof to another, till they came to the top of the veranda which sheltered Christ while He preached to the people in the court. They uncovered this roof above where He was.   
4. And when they had broken it upFor it does not seem to have been a very light structure, but to have required some labor. Yet they broke it up.   
4. They let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. Where there is a will there is a way, and when there is no way, a resolute will can make one. Better to come to Christ through the ceiling than not to come at all. Better to be let down to Him by a rope than not to be in His Presence!   
5. When Jesus saw their faithFor He has a very quick eye to faith and though we do not read that they had said anything and, therefore, they had not expressed their faithyet this bold and venturous action in breaking up the roof and letting all the dust fall about the Saviors head, not fearing that they would provoke Him, but trusting in His gentleness and patience, showed their confidence that they had only to get the man where Christ could see him, and good would come of it. When he saw their faith.   
5, 6. He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, your sins are forgiven you. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their heartsThey had come with a bad motive. They wanted to find fault and they took their seats that they might hear everything very carefully, take notes of it and put it downand make as much mischief of it as they could! They had their ears open. They did not know, however, that He could read their hearts, or they might not have been so forward in coming into His Presence. They were sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts.   
7. Why does this Man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God? Which was quite true, but then He was God and, therefore, it was not blasphemy! Blasphemy it would have been had he not been Divine.   
8, 9. And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason you these things in your hearts? Which is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Your sins are forgiven you, or to say, Arise, and take up your bed, and walk? Do they not each require a Divine power? If I am Divine, I shall prove I am by healing this man. Then I have a right to say, Your sins are forgiven you.   
10-12. But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, (he said to the sick of the palsy, ) I say unto you, Arise, and take up your bed, and go your way into your house. And immediately he arose, took up his bed and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw anything like this. Admire and imitate the faith and the obedience of this paralytic! He did better than some, for there have been some who, out of very gratitude, have disobeyed Christ. I mean, when He said to one that he should not tell what Christ had done, he did tell it. But this man, though no doubt his gratitude would have prompted him to stay and throw himself at his Benefactors feet, or to stop at least and sing a hymn of thankfulness to God, yet he knows that to obey is the best form of gratitudeand as Christ had told him, Go your way into your house, he did just that! The best thing to do for Christ is to do what Christ bids you. There are many glittering forms of gratitude, but all is not gold that glitters. The most golden gratitude is that which scrupulously renders obedience to every command of Jesus Christ. Take this to heart, and do you likewise.   
13. And He went forth again by the seaside, and all the multitude came unto Him, and He taught them. Better air than there was in the house, and more room, but He kept to the same Gospel. He taught them.   
14. And as He passed by, He saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. Swept up his shekelsgathered up his account books stayed no longer. He rose from taking tolls to follow the Master! Oh, for just such a word tonight to some here present. Follow Me. And would to God there would be such a heart in them as there was in this man named Levi, alias Matthew, that they, too, might come and follow Jesus!

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 #1319 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SINNERS SAVIOR   
NO. 1319

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 1, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner. Luke 19:7.**

PUBLICANS, or tax-gatherers, among the Jews were objects of intense aversion. The nation was always restless under the Roman yoke, for the Israelites pride of lineage made him boast that he was born free and was never in bondage unto any man. Moreover, they had hopes of a great future under a Messiah who would lead them on to conquest and, therefore, the Roman yoke galled their shoulders exceedingly and the payment of taxes to a foreign power was a heavy grievance. That the people of God should pay tribute to a heathen power was a bone of continual contention and the persons of the tax-gatherers were held in bitter hatred. While they abhorred the collectors of customs as a class, they reserved their most intense contempt for any of their own countrymen who lent themselves to this obnoxious business.

They regarded such as almost renouncing their relationship to Israel and sharing the guilt of the oppressor. As a usual rule it would only be the lowest class of people among the Jews who would become collectors of tribute from their own countrymen. The outcasts and scapegoats of society would sometimes take to this detested business, but very rarely would a man of wealth and position, such as Zacchaeus evidently was, encounter the scorn which such an office brought upon him. Zacchaeus was not, perhaps, the actual tax collector who called upon individuals, but he was the superintendent of the custom house officers of the district, for, he was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich.

He came, perhaps, under even greater contempt than others because he occupied a more prominent position and carried on the unsavory business on a larger scale. Jewish society drew a cordon around the publicans and set them aside as moral lepers, with whom respectable people must not associate if they studied their souls health. And so Zacchaeus, with all his wealth, was regarded as a pariah by his fellow countrymen. He may have been a thoroughly honest and upright man, but that mattered little to those who had taken a prejudice against all publicans. He was regarded by the Pharisaic party as one of the offscouring of societya man not to be acknowledged in the street and into whose house no one would enter. He was a man to be shunned if he had the impertinence to enter the synagogue or the temple, and only to be tolerated because it was not possible to rid the world of him.

From the very first, our Lord had broken through this hard and fast rule. He disregarded all the traditional and fashionable rules of caste. Constantly did He address publicans as if they had the same feelings as other men. He talked with them and went into their houses, so that He

came to be commonly called by those who wished to show their contempt of Him, the friend of publicans and sinners. A man who could be a friend to publicans was reckoned to be as evil as publicans, themselves, and further than that, a man could not go! If the Jew mentioned publicans and sinners, he always gave publicans the first place, as being decidedly the worse of the two! Friend of publicans and sinnerswho can tell what a mass of contempt was condensed into that title!

Our Lord did not at all deviate from His course because of this scoffing, but He went on befriending sinners, even open sinners, sinners of the most avowed and undoubted degree of sin! He almost commenced His ministry by talking to an unchaste woman at the well of Sychar. And He finished it by dispensing pardon to a thief while hanging on the Cross and between that calling of the woman of Samaria who had had five husbands and was living unlawfully at the timeright along to the thief who died upon the gallows tree for his crime, the Savior had been receiving sinners and eating with them! He had been seeking and saving that which was lost!

The old contempt of the sinners Savior still lingers in the world among the self-righteous. Taking different shapes and speaking with other voices, it is still among us and still, in one way or the other, the old charge is repeated that Christianity is too lenient on the sinner. They say it tends to discourage the naturally amiable and virtuous, and looks too favorably upon the vicious and disreputable. They say that it is always talking about pardon without merit and speaking slightingly of human goodness. And therefore some even say they regard Christianity as a foe to society and an enemy to good morals. How easily could we turn the tables upon these slanderers, for usually those who talk thus have but a scant supply of morals and virtues themselves.

First, Brothers and Sisters, it was said that Jesus had gone to be a guest of a man that was a sinner, and we shall admit the truth of the charge. Secondly, we shall deny the insinuation which that charge is meant to cover. And thirdly, we shall rejoice in the fact which has been the subject of the objection.

I. First, then, we shall ADMIT THE TRUTH OF THE CHARGE. We do so most cheerfully and without the slightest reserve! Jesus

did go to be a guest of a man that was a sinner and He did so not only once, but as often as He saw a need. He went after the sheep which had gone astray and He had a wonderful attraction for the disreputable classes, for it is written, Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. His ministry was aimed at those who were as sheep without a shepherd and it succeeded among such, for we read that the publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom! We are not, for a single moment, going to deny what is so evidently trueJesus was and is the sinners Friend.

We admit most fully and freely that the Gospel which now represents Christ upon earth bears the most kindly relationship towards the guilty. That, in fact, it contemplates their salvation and finds its greatest triumphs among them! To begin with, the object of Christ and the design of the Gospel is the saving of sinners. If there is any man in this world who is not guilty, the Savior is nothing to him. If there is anyone who has never transgressed Gods Law, but has kept His Commandments from his youth up and is excellent and meritorious in himself, Jesus Christ did not come into the world to call such a man to repentance. Why should He? The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.

Christ comes not to proffer His needless services to those who are not sin-sick or needy! A Savior for those who are not lost? A Redeemer for those who are not enslaved? Alms for the rich? Medicine for the whole? Pardon for the innocent? These are all needless things! A physician does not at all hesitate to say that he comes into a town with his eyes upon the sick. It would be ridiculous for him to come there with a view to anybody else! And so to guilty sinners Jesus comes. Gospel promises are addressed to the guilty. Who else would need abundant pardon? Gospel invitations are addressed to the sinful. Who should be entreated to wash but those who are foul? Gospel blessings are intended for those who have transgressed and are under condemnation, for who else would value forgiveness and justification?

I know, myself, of no Gospel for men who have not sinned! I know of no New Testament promises intended for those who have never broken the Law of God! I perceive all through the wondrous pages of the Gospel that Mercys eyes and heart are set upon those who are guilty and selfcondemned! The Eternal Watcher is looking over the vast ocean of life, not that He may spy out the vessels which sail along proudly in safety, but that He may see those who are almost wrecks. He looks upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profits me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the Pit, and his life shall see the light.

Our Lord was more moved at the sight of sickness than of health! He worked His greatest wonders among fevers, leprosies and palsies! This is the end and object of the Gospel, namely, to save the unrighteous! The God of the Gospel is He that justifies the ungodly, for when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. As the Gospels eye is thus fixed on sinners, we have to notice that our Lord does actually call sinners into its fellowship. Zacchaeus did not come to Jesus, first, but Jesus went after Him while he was yet a sinner, and said to him, Today I must abide in your house. So does the Gospel, by the Holy Spirits power, continually call to itself the guilty!

The drunk, the thief, the harlot, the profane, the careless, the prayerless are called outthose who are consciously guilty are led to faith and pardon. Not merely those guilty of open sin, but those guilty of secret sinsins of the heart, sins of the imagination, sins which stain the inmost soul are converted and saved! Jesus Christ causes His ministers, in the preaching of the Word of God, to gather out of the world and into the Church those who were enemies and alienated in their minds by wicked works. The Spirit of God does not effectually call those who are without sin, but He calls sinners to repentance. The Spirit of God does not quicken those livingliving in their own natural goodnessHe quickens the dead

in trespasses and sins!

The eternal love of God does not go forth towards those who dream of their own superiority and wrap themselves up in the mantle of their own righteousness, but it goes forth unto those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and iron because they have rebelled against the Lord and contemned the counsel of the Most High. These are they upon whom this mighty love fixes itself and upon whom Sovereign Grace exerts its power! The great Founder of Zion has found inhabitants for her, even as Romulus peopled Rome. It is said of that renowned builder that when he walled his city he peopled it by permitting the offscouring of all other cities to use it as a refuge. Glorious things are spoken of you, O Zion, city of God, and yet all your citizens confess that they were guilty and defiled till Jesus washed and renewed them! Today Jesus, the Son of David, enlists under His banner men who are in debt and are discontented! And out of such as these are, He makes heroes of the Cross! Gladly would I invite to the cave Adullam of His Church those who are willing to enlist under the banner of the Son of David!

Moreover, while we are about it, we will make a further confession the Man Christ Jesus does very readily come to be a guest with a man who is a sinner, for He stands on no ceremony with sinners, but makes Himself at home with them at once. If a Pharisee had gone to Zacchaeus house and been allowed to do exactly what he liked, he would have said, Well, I may, perhaps, condescend to enter your profane abode, Zacchaeus, but I must wash first and wash afterwards also. And, moreover, you, also, must wash and also have your house specially purifiedit must be whitewashed, scrubbed, and perfumed with incense. And then, if you will take a seat up in the far corner of the room, I will not mind coming near the door, where the fresh air may, perhaps, remove any exhalations from your guilty person, for I, being so transcendently holy, am exceedingly sensitive and cannot come into contact with your unholiness.

Now, the Lord Jesus Christ did not ask Zacchaeus even to wash his little finger, but He said, Make haste, and come down, for today I must abide in your house. Why, Zacchaeus had the green of the tree all over him! He was not in a very elegant condition to receive the Lord and, worse still, there was his sin about him! And yet Jesus Christ said to him before he had brushed off a grain of dust, Make haste, and come down, for today I must abide in your house. To his house Jesus came and with him He sojourned, and all without ceremony and preparation! Yes, I have known the Lord Jesus meet with a man as black as Hell and wash him white in five minutesand sit at his side and eat bread with him at once!

I have known Him meet with the very vilest of offenders and almost in the twinkling of an eye He has made the transgressor to be His companion and His friend! Did not the father in the parable at once receive his returning son? How many minutes did he wait before he kissed him? How many times did the prodigal wash his face before his father pressed him to his bosom? He did not even tell him to wash his hands, though he had been feeding swine, but fell upon his neck and kissed him then and there! Our Lord Jesus not only has pity upon sinners, but treats them with love, comes under their roof and brings salvation to their homes! We confess the impeachment and rejoice that our Lord is indifferent to the censures of the proud and continues, still, to provoke the question, Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?

Our Lord goes further. He not only stands on no ceremony with sinners, but within a very little time He is using those very sinners who had been so unfit for any holy serviceusing them in His most hallowed world! Note how He makes Zacchaeus to be His hostToday I must abide in your house. Was not this going too far? Might we not have prudently suggested, Good Master, forgive Zacchaeus, but do it privately? Good Master, accept Zacchaeus as a secret disciple, but do not publicly go into such society! To sit at his table and let him wait upon You, is too great an honor for the likes of him! And surely, Brothers and Sisters, it seemed to the first Christians to be almost impossible that Saul of Tarsus could be allowed to be a preacher!

They heard that he now preached the faith which he had persecuted, but they could hardly believe in his Apostleship! What? When his hands were just now blood-red with putting saints to death, is he to stand up and preach and to be an Apostlehow can it be? We all have a measure of this legal hardness and are scarcely prepared to allow the guilty to become heralds of Grace too soon after their conversion! The Gospel knows nothing of a purgatory at the Church doors, or a quarantine before its pulpit! Only is it, indeed, seen that a man has really accepted Christ and we may both receive him into fellowship and employ him in holy service! Jesus permits the man who was a sinner to become His host, even as He allowed the woman who was a sinner to anoint His head, and Peter, who had denied Him, to feed His sheep!

Yes, and the Lord favored Zacchaeus, the sinner, by granting him, that day, the full assurance of salvation. The very day that He called him, by His Grace, He gave him full assuranceat any rate I should not want any better assurance than Zacchaeus received when the Lord, Himself said to him, This day is salvation come to your house.

*Oh, might I hear Your heavenly tongue But whisper, You are Mine!*

*Those gentle words should raise my song To notes almost Divine.*  
How often have we sung this wish, but Zacchaeus had it granted him, for the Lord said plainly, Salvation has come to your house, and Zacchaeus could not doubt it! How happy he must have felt, how free from all troubleI am a saved man and salvation, having once entered the house, there is no telling where it will goit will be upstairs, downstairs, among the servants, among the children! It will embrace all my descendants and I and my house shall be saved!

He obtained that choice blessing within the first day of his believing on Christ! And is it not wonderful, poor Sinner, that though you, even now, have not believed in Jesus as yet, and are sitting down in sorrow, burdened with sin, yet if you now believebefore this service shall be over, you may not only be saved but know itand shall go home and say to your wife and children, Salvation has come to our house! Blessed be the name of Jesus! All this is true and we have no wish to conceal it! Jesus

Christ has gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner!

II. Secondly, we are going to DENY THE INSINUATION WHICH IS COVERTLY INTENDED BY THE CHARGE brought against our Lord. Jesus is the Friend of sinners, but He is not the Friend of sin! Jesus forgives sin altogether apart from human merit, but Jesus does not, therefore, treat virtue and vice as if they were indifferent things, or in any way discourage purity and righteousness. Far from it, for, first, Christ was a guest with a man that was a sinner, but He never flattered a sinner yet. Direct me to a single passage in His Word in which He ever justifies a sinner in sinning, or ever treats sin as if it were a trifle, or looks at it as a mere misfortune and not as a crime!

No religion under Heaven is so strong in its denunciation of sin as the religion of Jesus Christ! His Words do not only condemn acts of sin, but even words and thoughts, in such words as theseFor every idle word that man shall speak, he shall give an account in the Day of Judgment. God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. The Saviors lips were too truthful and too pure to pander to the vices of men! He denounced sin in every form and shape and threatened it with everlasting fire! You do not find Jesus Christ anywhere asserting that the result of sin is a merely temporal evil, that the souls of sinners will be annihilated, or that they will, by-and-by, in another state, obtain forgiveness and be delivered, but, these shall go away into everlasting punishment rolls like thunder from His honest lips.

He sweeps away from men all their empty confidences wherein they entrenched themselves and makes them see that whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. He who lives in sin is declared to be the servant of sin, and he who brings forth evil fruit is judged to be an evil tree. Christs fan is in His hand and He sweeps away the chaff. He sits as a refiner and consumes the dross. He lays the axe at the root of tree and demands that the heart and spirit be right before God. If He sets forth obedience to the Law, our Lord declares that it must be obedience in every point, or a man cannot be saved by it. If He accepts a follower, He bids him count the cost and forsake all that he has, or he cannot be His disciple. His moral standard isBe you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

If you want the standard of the Laws of God lowered, you must not go to Christ! And if you wish to see the penalties of sin mitigated, you must not go to Christ, for He is, of all Teachers, the most severe against sin of every sort, and the most clear in foretelling its penalty. The Friend of sinners is too much their Friend to befriend their sinthat He utterly abhors and He will never rest till He has driven it out of them. Neither does the Lord Jesus Christ screen sinners from that proper and wholesome rebuke which virtue must always give to vice.

The Pharisees, no doubt, meant to say, This man Jesus does mischief. We keep ourselves aloof from all low company and in this way we do a good deal for these publicans, because we let them see the difference between holy and unholy men! When they look at our phylacteries between our eyes and observe the broad borders of our garments, and see how we wash our hands, and know how we tithes on mint and cumin, it must greatly edify them! No doubt they will go home and feel greatly ashamed that they cannot associate with such blessed and holy people as we are. Now, that Man, Christ, goes in among them and eats and drinks with them! And thus, in some measure, our protest is broken down. They will think a great deal of themselves, now that the proper distance is no longer kept up, for they will say, if this Man, who is, no doubt, a good man, associates with us, then, after all, we are not so bad as we were thought to be.

That is how the Pharisees argued and there are some around us who still think that the best thing you can possibly do with the degraded is to isolate them. Turn your back on them! The sight of a good mans back will be a fine moral lesson to them! Make them to feel that you are disgusted with them and they will be brought to repent. But it does not turn out to be so. This process has generally been carried out by proud formalists and loathsome hypocrites and has ended in making bad worse! Jesus never sanctions this mode of reformation. Look at Him and admire! Did He say a word to Zacchaeus about his having taken taxes by false means, or about his being cruel to the poor? No, not a syllable!

Christs Presence was enough rebuke for the mans sin. No sooner does a man perceive the love of Christ and the perfection of His blessed Person, than straightway sin receives its death blow and is ashamed to show itself anymore. Jesus is the best rebuke to sin. The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not say to you, who live in sin, You are not fit company for Christians. Nor does it turn to godly people and say, Make these your daily associates and join in their mirth. Quite the opposite! But it does, nevertheless, say to Christians, Go and seek out the lost and bring them to a better mind. We go not among the sin-smitten to catch their disease, but to cure it! Going in such a spirit, a good mans presence is a far better rebuke to sin than a cold, self-righteous isolation. The Gospel does not aim so much at rebuking sinners as at reclaiming them. Its business is not to make men feel remorse for having sinned, but to rid them from the power of sin.

Again, it is not true, as I have heard some say, that the Gospel makes pardon seem such a very easy thing and, therefore, sin is thought to be a small matter. Oh, says one, if men have only to believe and be saved, you put a premium upon sin by making deliverance from it to be so speedy a business. These cavilers know better, some of them, and if they do not know better, let us teach them! When the Lord Jesus Christ forgave me, He taught me at the same moment to dread sin. I never had such a sense of the terrible evil of sin as I had in the moment of my forgiveness! Where, do you think, did I read my pardon? I read it on His Cross written in crimson lines! I understood that, though the pardon was free to me, it cost Him cries and groans to bring me near to God. It cost His soul an agony never to be described before He could redeem one poor sinner from going down into the Pit. It is a gross injustice to charge the preaching of the Gospel to sinners with making sin to appear a trifle! The accusation is a baseless slander!   
They who know no atoning blood. They who know nothing of the sufferings of Christthese are they who can toy with sin. But those who gaze upon the wounds of Christ cannot but tremble at sin! The great doctrine of the Substitutionary Sacrifice, whenever it is fully received by the soul, makes sin to be exceeding sinful! Oh, Sin, I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but on the Cross my eyes see you slaying the Incarnate God! I abhor myself in dust and ashes!

Now, though Christ is the Friend of sinners, is it true that He makes men think lightly of personal character? Oh, say some, these Christians teach that believing a creed saves the soul and that it does not matter at all how we live. This is an old libel. I remember reading much the same charge in a book which leveled its artillery at Wilberforce and his evangelical friends. The author said, in a cant, unmeaning jargon, they talk much of vital faith, but they say little of vital benevolence. He goes on to remark that to teach men to be honest, clean, kind and truthful was far more important. Now, it is time that such a slander as that came to an end, but a lie has many lives and though you kill it 50 times over, it soon restores itself to vitality. Look at the matter of fact.

Jesus Christ did not teach Zacchaeus, by going to his house, that character was of no consequence. On the contrary, Zacchaeus perceived at once that character was of the greatest consequence and so he stood forth, and said, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Let who will, deny the logic of it! The fact is that when a man comes to believe in Jesus, he has a higher appreciation of the excellence of character than any other man in the world. And he does not merely appreciate it in theory, but begins to seek after it for himself.

Mans nature becomes renewed by the faith which, some say, will cause him to become indifferent to holiness. A mans whole life is changed by his believing in Jesus, and that which thus happily affects the character cannot honestly be said to lead to indifference concerning it! Even the remark I quoted now about Wilberforce was signally false, because it was through him and the party which gathered around him that benevolence gained one of her very noblest victories. How would the slave in the West Indies have obtained his liberty if it had not been for these very men? Wilberforce and the like, who while they held that faith in Christ, alone, could save the soul, felt that benevolence was the essential spirit of Christianity and liberty the natural right of every man! They spent their whole strength in fighting against the mercenary feeling of the times, till the fetters of Englands slaves were broken forever!

It has been said that if we tell men that good works cannot save them, but that Jesus saves the guilty who believe in Him, we take away all motives for morality and holiness. We meet that, again, by a direct denialit is not sowe supply the grandest motive possible and only remove a vicious and feeble motive! We take away from man the idea of performing good works in order to salvation, because it is a lie! Good works will not save a sinner, nor is he able to perform them if they

could save him! Works done with a view to salvation are not good, because they are evidently selfish and so are not acceptable to God. The selfishness of the motive poisons the life of the work and takes its goodness out of it.

But when we tell men, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, if they exercise faith they are saved! And being saved there grows up in their hearts gratitude to Godand from this springs a loving desire to serve God on account of what He has doneand this motive is not only very powerful but it is very pure, because the man does not, then, serve God with a view to self, but he serves Him out of love! And works done out of love to God are the only good works possible to men. It supplies a motive which is clean, clear, purea motive, moreover, which is proven by the lives of saved men to be potent enough to keep them in the way of righteousness all their days.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ gives men something more than motive, it supplies them with power and life, for wherever men believe on the Lord Jesus the Holy Spirit is surely at work with all His wondrous power! He enters the heart and changes it, turns the whole current of the soul and creates within the man a new, living, conquering principle akin to the Nature of God, Himself, so that the man becomes and continues to be a new creature in Christ Jesus. This indwelling Spirit is not a theory, nor a doctrine, but a Personand His work is not a dream, but a conscious facta phenomenon to which all Believers bear witness, for we have known Him and felt His power! We have bowed before the might and majesty of His influences.

As the anointing on Aarons head went where Aaron went, so where Christ is received, the Holy Spirit comes, the new creation commences and men are delivered from living as they did before, under the bondage of corruption. Thus we repel with indignation the charge that Christ is the abettor of sinand yet we preach with unabated eagerness this good news for sinnersWhatever sin you may have committed, and however stained you may be with habits of evil, there is immediate pardon to be had and complete salvation to be obtained, now, on this very spot, if you will but accept it and trust Jesus for it! We assure you of this from our own experience! We also assure you that all your good works, prayers, tears and almsgivings will go for nothing if you trust in them! But though you may be covered with ten thousand times ten thousand sins, if you believe in Jesus you shall be saved from them all!

He is a Savior and a great one! And He is able to deliver great sinners. This will not make you think lightly of sin, nor cause you to continue in sin that Grace may abound, but it will give you the power which you need! It will supply you with a strength you have never been able to find, notwithstanding all your efforts! It will enable you to rejoice that you are saved and, in the strength of such an assurance, you will find within your heart a love for holiness and an abhorrence of sin such as you have never known before! You will go to the door of your heart and say to the devil, Get you gone! And to the lusts of the flesh, Get you behind me! And as to all the temptations which arise from old companions you will shut the door in their faces and say, Depart from me!

III. In the third place, WE REJOICE IN THE VERY FACT WHICH HAS

BEEN OBJECTED TO, that Jesus Christ comes to be a guest with men who are sinners. And first, dear Brothers and Sisters, we rejoice in it because it affords hope to ourselves. It often happens that we should never have a hope of His coming to be a guest with us if He were not a guest to sinners. To me, such gracious facts are needed to save me from despair. Oh, it is mighty easy to build up a fine experience and a pretty sanctification. And to imagine that you are getting on wonderfully and becoming strong and pure, and very superior saints, indeed. Let the devil deal with you five minutes and he will show you something of quite another color!

Let your old corrupt nature only bubble up for a quarter of an hour and you will find such a condition of things in your soul that you will cry out in bitterness of anguish! Then will you find that fine words about experience do not fit your mouth and all your notions of being somebody will evaporate like dew in the summers sun. Oh the thousands of times when I have looked for any mouse hole through which I might creep if I might but enter into a little hope! I love to preach a sinners Gospel, for it suits myself! I delight to preach holiness and will aim at it as long as I live and can never be content until I am perfect, but still, my soul needs and must have the sinners Savior! Nothing else will do for me!

Whenever I get nearest to my Lord and feel most of His preciousness, and enjoy most communion with Him, I lay lower before Him than ever and feel it to be an unspeakable privilege to creep to His feet and wash them with my tears. I have, at this moment, no sort of hope but in mercy, great mercy rendered to a great sinner through the sacrifice of Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, what is there to depend upon, except the sinners Savior? If He does not save sinners, as sinners, by an act of free, rich, Sovereign Mercy, altogether apart from anything that is in them and of them, what will happen to you and me? We do not wish to make any excuses for our sin! We would loathe it and abhor ourselves before God on account of it, but still, a wash in the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness suits us today as well as it did 27 years ago, when, for the first time, we looked to Jesus and lived!

Do you not find it so, my beloved Brothers and Sisters? After half a century of knowing Christ, do you not find that you need a sinners Savior as much as ever? You will need Him when you come to die even as you need Him now! And while you are languishing into everlasting life, He will be your strength and your song, and you will be glad to think that, this Man receives sinners and eats with them. Again, we rejoice that it is true for another reason, because this affords us hope for all our fellow men. Suppose that our Lord did not visit any but the good, moral and excellent? Then, alas, for poor Londons back streets and crowded courts! Alas for the casual ward! Alas for the penitentiary and alas for the jail! Alas for the fallen woman and alas for the thief!

But now there is hope for even these and every philanthropist ought to feel, deep down in his soul, the most profound gratitude to the Lord for this fact. This is earths brightest star! This is her well of hope, her dawn of joy! Since Jesus Christ receives the guilty and saves the vile, despondency and despair have, from now on, no right to haunt the abodes of men! Hope smiles on all and invites the most fallen to look up and live! Yes, and let me tell you Pharisees, if there are any representatives of that section here todaythough you do not like the idea of Grace to the guilty, but cling to the idea of your being rewarded for your supposed meritit is a great mercy for you that Jesus receives great offenders because you must be numbered among them!

What is your heart but a raging sea of pride and enmity against God and even against your fellow men? You despise Gods ordained plan of Grace and you look with contempt upon the guilty whom He deigns to save! Is it not the spirit of the devil which makes you think yourself so much above your fellow men? Is it not an intolerable inhumanity which makes you wish that the Gospel were molded to suit you and to shut out poor sinners? Who are you to carry your head so high? If you have never sinned as open transgressors have done, yet it is very probable that you would have done worse if you had been placed in the positions which they have occupied! With all their faults there are greater faults in youand if somebody were to set to work to read the secrets of your soul, aloud, you would be much ashamed!

Ah, there are many who are pluming themselves upon their virtues who, in the sight of God, are as rotten at the core as even the unchaste and the profane! There are more thieves, I doubt not, outside our jails than there are inside! And there are more double-dyed sinners than we ever dreamed of who appear respectable and yet are abominable! Yes, even among nominal Christians there are plenty of scarlet sinnersthey are always at the place of worship, very regular in all acts of outward devotionand yet they indulge in secret uncleanness and are as bad as any in the felons prison!

If my Master were to repeat, today, a certain scene in which He figured so wonderfully, some of those now present would be placed in an awkward position. A woman taken in adultery was brought before Him. He did not, for a moment, justify her crime, but He said with great power and to the point, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. I say to you who pretend that you are righteous, that if your consciences speak, you must admit that you have no righteousness, but are so sinful that you have not a stone to fling, even against the grossest sinner! Convicted by your own conscience you may go outbut it were better, still, if you were to stay here and say, Yes, in my heart I am guilty, too, and I bless Christ that He is a sinners Savior, and that even I may look to Him this day and live.

We rejoice that this is the fact, because when we are working for the Lord it cheers us up with the hope of fine recruits. Many become very cold, stale and mechanical in their work for Jesus within a short time after they are converted. The enthusiasm dies out, the warmth chills. I remember a sailor who, before conversion, used to swear, and I guarantee you he would rattle it out, volley after volley! He became converted and when he prayed it was much in the same fashion. How he woke everybody up the first time he opened his mouth at the Prayer Meeting! The little Church had quite a revival, for their old jog-trot pace would not do for the new convert so full of love and zeal!

The prayers offered in the meetings had become quite stereotyped and so had everything else about them. There were the same sleepy people, the same long prayers and the same dreary addresses. But Jacks con

version was like an earthquake and startled everybodyand their zeal revived. They even began to think that, perhaps, sailors might be saved, and started a service on the wharf and did many other good things. The conversion of a great sinner is the best medicine for a sick Church! In all the churches, you good people who are settled on your lees, need stirring up every now and then, and one of the best stirrings up you can have is to open the door of the Church and see a Saul of Tarsus standing there to be admitted!

The porter enquires, Who is this that seeks admission here? A recruit, says he, and we look at him. Why, he is one of the devils most famous soldiers, one of the men who carried the black flag in the battle, one who ridiculed us most! We are apt to look a little askance at him, for we feel dubious. So we refer him to the elders, that they may enquire and sift him, to see whether he is really a changed character. Perhaps these earnest men are not quite sure and hesitate till they see more of him. And they are quite right to do so. But if the Lord has really called the sinner, by His Grace, no sooner does the Church receive such a man than they find that he has brought with him fresh fire and throws a fresh impetus into the whole work! Our Lord Jesus, then, when He goes to be a guest with a man that is a sinner, brings additional strength to the Church and finds her recruits of the very sort she most needs. We will therefore rejoice and bless the sinners Savior.

I wonder, this morning, where Zacchaeus iswhether he is up in the gallery there! Has there come in here a man who is a sinner and knows it? Has there come in here, this morning, one who, if I were to pass a label up to him inscribed with the word, SINNER, would hang it round his neck and say, I am the man? Where are you, Zacchaeus? Jesus calls you! He means to save you at once! He says to you, I must abide in your house today. Make haste down and open the door, and say, Come in, my Lord, I am honored to receive You. Will any hesitate? Will any delay? May my Masters Holy Spirit cause, today, many a great sinners heart to open and receive Jesus joyfully!

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON** Luke 18:31-43; 19:1-10**.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK257, 543, 544.

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A DAY TO BE REMEMBERED   
NO. 2665

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, MARCH 11, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 1, 1882.

**And Jesus said unto him, This day has salvation come to this house. Luke 19:9.**

OBSERVE, dear Friends, that our Lord spoke this sentence to Zacchaeus. Some of us may have fancied that He said it to the objecting people, but He did not. They may have heard it and their objection may have been answered by it, but the main purpose of our blessed Lord, in uttering those words, was not to answer objectors, but to comfort one who might feel dispirited by their murmuring remark. Therefore, Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house.

It is always better to comfort Believers than to answer quibblers. The quibblers scarcely deserve a reply, for they are pretty sure to find fault againit is according to their nature to do so. But as for the poor distressed people of God, who gladly receive the Truth of God, and yet have to endure unkind observations, let these be cheered, for has not the Lord, Himself, said, Comfort you, comfort you My people? Now, what could give Zacchaeus greater consolation than for the Lord Jesus Christ to bear witness to the fact of his salvation? Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house.

I fancy that I can hear some of you say, We should count it the happiest day in our lives if the Lord Jesus would come and tell us that salvation had come to us. But, Beloved, you cannot have Him come, in the flesh, to say that to you, for He has gone away, to carry on His service elsewhere. Among other things, He has gone to prepare a place for you who believe in Him. But His Spirit is equally Divine and He is always with usand you may have the Spirit of God bearing witness with your spirit that you are the children of God. No, I trust that you not only believe that you may have this Witness, but that you actually have had it you have had that secret, silent, inward evidence which no man understands but the one who receives itand you know, in your own soul, that you have passed from death unto life because the Holy Sprit has sealed that Truth of God upon your heart! Therefore, dear Friend, be joyful. Yes, be exceedingly glad! If anything can make a man leap for joy, it ought to be the assurance of his eternal safety. If salvation has come to your heart, you ought to be as happy as an angel! I think that there are some reasons why you should be even happier, for an angel cannot know, by personal experience, the bliss of having his sins forgiven. You who have realized this wondrous blessing ought to cause the wilderness and the solitary places to resound with the melody of your thanksgiving! And with the music of your grateful delight you should make even the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Oh, what bliss it is to be assured by the Holy Spirit, Himself, that you have passed from death unto life, and that salvation has indeed come to you! May many of you enjoy that bliss from this very hour!

Now let us come directly to the text. This day, says Christ, is salvation come to this house. You will not forget the outline of the sermon, for it is very simple, and one that can be easily remembered. First, This daywhat? Secondly, This daywhy? Thirdly, This daywhy not?

I. First, THIS DAYWHAT? What about this day?   
Christ says, This day is salvation come to this house. He seemed to cut that day out of all the rest of time and to say concerning it, This daythis particular dayon this very dayis salvation come to you. Then, let this day be a holy day and let it be a holiday! Let it be remembered for many a year, yes, let it be remembered throughout all time and throughout eternity, too. This day.   
You know that there are some people who observe certain days which God has not ordained to be kept in any special manner. The Galatians did so and, therefore, Paul wrote to them, I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. We do not judge those who act in a similar way, today, but still, like Paul, we are afraid for themthat is to say, we fear they are mistaken in what they do. But there are some days which God commanded to be observed.   
The first was the day when the work of creation was finished, concerning which we read, On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made. The completion of the creation, when, God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good, deserves to be remembered! And does not the new creation also deserve to be remembered? When the Lord creates in a man a new heart and a right spirit, shall we not say, one to another, This daythis joyful daythis Divine daythis new creation dayis a day to be observed very specially?   
It is clear, from the practice of the Apostles, that the Lord intends us to observe the first day of the week, because that was the day of Christs Resurrection from the dead, the day of the completion of our redemptionand well may we commemorate the complete redemption even more than the complete creation! Shall not each saved man especially celebrate the day when he was redeemed from sin? Shall he not count it worthy to be observed, with holy rites of preaching, praise and prayer, and to be had in grateful remembrance as long as he lives? Each Believer can say of the Lords Day, This day the Lord redeemed my soul out of the land of the enemy and set me free forever. God has appointed but one day to be kept sacred above all othersthat is the Lords Day. Your Christmas days, and your Good Fridays and all such seasons are only observed by mans ordinancebut the Sabbath is ordained of Godand that is to be observed as the emblem of rest. Now, surely, when a man comes into rest and we which have believed do enter into rest, then that day should be especially observed by him. It should become a Sabbath unto the Lord throughout the mans whole lifethat happy day in which salvation came to him. Let, then, this day stand as a special day in your calendar! Mark it with a red line, if you like. Or mark it with a golden seal and let it be had in remembrance forevermore.   
Our Lord said to Zacchaeus, This day is salvation come to this house. From these Words I learn, first, that salvation is a speedy blessing. It can come to a house in a day. No, more, it can take possession of a mans heart in a day. No, to go further, this great work can be accomplished in a single moment! I suppose that the new birth is actually a thing which requires no appreciable period of timea flash and it is done! If a man is dead and he is restored to life, there may be, in certain respects, a gradual operation upon that man and some time may elapse before he is able to walk. But there must be a certain instant in which there is life in the man, whereas, a moment before, there was no life in him. The actual quickening must be a thing that is instantaneous, so that the working of salvation in a man may not only be performed this day, or this hour, or this quarter of an hour, but this minute, or even this second! Between light and darkness there is usually a period of twilight and so there is in the soul, but, even in twilight there is a measure of light, and there must be a moment when the first real beam of light begins to smite the ebonite darkness.

So there must be a moment when Grace first enters the soul and the man who before was graceless, becomes gracious! I think this is a good point to be remembered. You poor deluded souls who hope to save yourselves by your own works will have to keep on throughout your whole lives at that useless occupation! And even when you lie dying, you may be sure that you are not saved if you have been trusting to your own works. But he that believes in Christ Jesus is saved then and there and he can joyfully sing   
*Tis done! The great transactions done! I am my Lords, and He is mine.*   
This is a blessed fact, that salvation can come to a soul this very hour. No, as I have already reminded you, long before the hand of that clock shall have reached the end of this hour, salvation may have entered into many hearts that are in this place, as truly as it entered into the house of Zacchaeus!   
Next, I learn from our text that salvation is a discernible blessing. This day is salvation come to this house. Christ could see it, so that it was something which could be seen. Yes, and salvation was also seen by Zacchaeus, himself, and the fruits of it were soon seen by those who were in the house with him. Do not suppose that a man can be saved and yet know nothing about the great change that has been worked in him. It is not every man who can say for certain that he is saved, for faith is a thing of growth and assurance may not come at once. But when a man is really and completely saved, he has but to use the proper means and he may become absolutely certain of it. God the Holy Spirit is willing and waiting to give the full assurance of faith and of understanding to those who seek it at His hands.  
Next, salvation is a perfect blessing. This day is salvation come to this house. Well, but only as late as yesterday that man had not even seen Jesus! Half an hour ago, he was climbing a tree, like a boy might have done, with no wish but just to get a sight of Jesus! And, now, is that man saved? Yes, says Christ, this day is salvation come to this house. But, surely, you dont talk as positively as that concerning a man who came here tonight unsaved and who has just trusted in Jesus? You must mean that he has reached a hopeful stage in his experience and that, after several years, he may, perhaps, come to be really assured that he is a saved man. I mean nothing of the sort! I mean just what the text implies, which is that the moment the Lord Jesus Christ crossed the threshold of the house of Zacchaeus, his sins were forgiven him, his heart was renewed, his spirit was changed and he was a saved man. But, someone asks, is anybody ever saved before he dies? Yes, certainly! Were those persons dead of whom Paul wrote, For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God. They were living men and women, yet the Apostle said that they were savedand so they were! And, at the present moment, there are hundreds of thousands of believers in Jesus upon the face of this earth who are as truly saved, now, as they will be when they stand before the burning Throne of God without spot, or wrinkle or any such thing. In Gods judgment, by virtue of the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, on whom they are resting by faith, they have been delivered from condemnation, they have escaped from the dominion of sin and, in a word, they are saved! So, you see dear Friends, that salvation is a perfect blessing.   
Notice, next, that it is a much-containing blessing. A man who believes in Christ is saved directly, but he does not fully know how much that word, saved, means yet. It is like a big box that comes into the house and you begin to open it and to take out, first, one thing and then another. There, you say, that is all. Oh, no! somebody says, who looks more carefully, here is another packet. Well, then, that is surely all. There is nothing but straw at the bottom of the box. You put your hand in and you cry, Why, there is something more, and something more what a boxful it is! And what a boxful salvation is! You have no idea what there is in itnot only the pardon of sin, but justifying righteousness. Not only that, but regeneration, a new heart and a right spirit! Not only that, but sanctification, adoption, acceptance, power in prayer, preservation, perseverance, victoryyes, we are to be more than conquerors through Him that has loved usand all that is in the box!   
Yes, and more, too, for we are to have a safe and happy departure out of this world and an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of God our Father! All that is in the box and all that had come into the house of Zacchaeus when the Lord Jesus Christ came there. And you, also, have all that if you have Christ, for it is all in Christ. You know how He said, All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and Paul wrote to the Corinthians, All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christs and Christ is Gods. You will never get to the bottom of that box which bears the name, salvation. However great your needs may be, you may keep on taking out of it all that you require and still there shall be more left! Or, to change the figure, salvation is a springing well from which the more you draw, the more there is remaining, for drawn wells are always the sweetest and usually the fullest. So, bring your buckets to this great well of Gospel Grace that is springing up at your very feet! Thus you see that salvation is an all-containing blessing.   
And, next, it is a spreading blessing, for salvation had come to the house of Zacchaeusnot to him only, but I hope it means to his wife, his children, and his servants. I never like to have the servants left out, though I am afraid that they often are. You servants who live in Christian families, mind that you do not get left out, for remember that Noah, although he was a good man, did not get a servant into the ark with him and his family. Also remember Lot. He was a good man of a very poor sort and he only got his two children out of Sodom, and no servant went with them. It is a sad thing when you live and labor in the midst of Christian people and yet you remain unsaved. I hope and believe that in the case of Zacchaeus, all in his house were saved when salvation came there.   
But, once more, the salvation which had come to the house of Zacchaeus, was an abiding blessing, for I never read that it went away. If salvation comes to a mans house, it comes to stay there, as Christ said to Zacchaeus, I must abide at your house. I can never believe in a man being saved for a time and then falling from Graceand having to begin all over again. If he does not hold on his way to the end, it is clear that he was never really saved at all. As I have often told you, I can understand a man being regenerated, that is, being born againbut then some people tell us that it is possible for him, afterwards, to fall away from Grace. But what is to become of him the next time? Why, I suppose that he must be re-regenerated, born again and again! But I never read in Scripture anything of the kind. A man may be born again once, but he cannot be born again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again! That cannot be! When the work of regeneration is once done, it is done forever! The work of man comes to an end, but the work of God fails not. That which is born of God is as immortal as God Himself! The new life that comes into the converted man from God cannot die. How often do we ring in the ears of our friends those glorious words of our Lord, 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 man is able to pluck them out of My Fathers hand. Happy is the man to whose house salvation comes, for it comes to stay, world without end!   
That must suffice for the first head, This daywhat?   
II. Now, secondly, we are to think of another aspect of the subject, that is, THIS DAYWHY? Why had salvation come to the house of Zacchaeus that day?  
I answer, because that day Zacchaeus was called by effectual Grace and whenever effectual Grace comes to anyone, it brings salvation. Therefore, brethren, as Peter says, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for these are the things that accompany salvation. If you are sure that you are called of God, you may be quite certain that you are saved, for this daythe day in which a man is effectually called by Gracethis day does salvation come to his house. Look, dear Friends, God chose His people in His everlasting purpose, but salvation did not come to their houses that day. They knew nothing of it at that time, for they were not then born! Christ redeemed His people when He died on the Cross, but salvation did not come to their houses that day, for the most of them were not then in existence. But, in the fullness of time, the Gospel was preached to them and they heard it. Yet, in all cases, salvation did not come to their houses that day, for though they heard it, they refused it. But the moment that effectual Grace says to anyone, Today I must abide at your house, that Grace at once gains admission and salvation comes, then and there, to that mans house. You remember how the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, Whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified? These great blessings are joined together, like the links of a chain, and you cannot pull them apart! There is the calling that fits into the justification and the chain is so made that the two links never can be separated. And then justification fits into glorification in such a way that you cannot possibly part them. It is no use for anyone to try to separate them. The devil may pull and hammer as much as ever he likes, but all his efforts will be in vain. I have sometimes likened that passage in Romans to a vast suspension bridge between earth and HeavenFor 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. If you get your foot firmly resting on that great plank of effectual calling, you may be quite sure that you will be able to cross all the rest of the bridge and will most certainly reach the other sideand be forever with the Lord.

But how do we know that Zacchaeus was really called? I answer in such a way that you may know whether you, also, are called or not. The call of Zacchaeus was an effectual call, first, because it was a personal call. He was up in the sycamore tree and He heard Christ call, Zacchaeus! Why, he said to himself, That is my name. He is calling me. Zacchaeus, make haste and come down. Then He can see that I am up here! His description exactly fits my case. Now, when you come and hear me preach the Gospel, I try to put the Truth of God before you in a clear and very pointed manner. Some people say that it is wrong to be personal in preaching, but I always try to be as personal as I can. Yet I know that many of my hearers pass on to their neighbors and friends what I say to them. Oh, that just fits Mrs. So-and-So, says somebody. No, my dear Sirit is meant for you, but you will not take it home to yourself. But when the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, calls, then the man says, Dear me! I do not believe that the preacher can see me right here, yet he is speaking straight at me. I am sure that he is. How amazing! He just mentioned something that cannot have occurred to anybody but me. He has exactly described my case.   
Those are the times when God is about to bless the soulwhen the man feels himself picked out from the rest of the congregation and the Gospel sharpshooter is just covering him with His rifle of Grace! I pray that the blessed bullet of the Gospel may find its mark in the very center of your heart and bring you down at the feet of Jesus as a weeping penitent! Zacchaeus! The Lord knew that was the name of the man up the sycamore and He also knows your name and your character. And when He means to call you by His effectual Grace, He will hold your photograph up and make you say, Yes, that is my portrait! There is nobody else exactly like that.   
Next, it was a royal call. Jesus said to Zacchaeus, Today I must abide at your house. One of our proverbs says, Must is for the king. And when the King speaks, He must be obeyed! We who are His ministers try to be very pressing and urgent, but when the Master Himself utters the call, where the word of that King is, there is power! I hope He is saying to someone here, Today I must abide in your heart. Now you have come to the point when you, also, will have to say, I must. There must be no turning back, now, dear Friend! You must not say to Christ, Go your way for this time. No, but you must say, This time is the time when I, also, will say, must, as Christ says it to me. That is an effectual call when it comes as a royal mandate, a warrant from the King! I must.   
Then, next, it was a call which produced immediate obedience. The Lord said to Zacchaeus, Make haste and come down. And we read, He made haste and came down. I think I see him coming down that tree a great deal faster than he had gone up! He had not moved at such a rate as that for a long while, but he scurried down, for he was told to make haste by One whose command compelled him to obey. When the Lord Jesus Christ calls any of you effectually, you will not put off your decision till the next morning. You will not say, I will wait till I can get home and pray. You will not even say, I will wait till the end of the service and then talk with a Christian, but your prayer will be, Lord, help me to look to Jesus, now. I yield myself up to You this very instant. I am in a hurry about it. Lord, I am making haste to get to You! Make haste to come and save me. I would not delay a single second longer. I want to be Yours alone, and Yours at once. That is a mark of effectual calling, when immediate obedience is given to the call.   
Another mark in the case of Zacchaeus was, that it was joyful obedience. He made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. Oh, the joy of the heart that receives Christ when Christ Himself does really come to the soul! The moment I believed in Christ, I wanted to shout, Hallelujah, and if I had done so, I think that I might have been forgiven. The moment one believes in Christ and knows that his sin is all gone, what extravagance would be extravagant under such circumstances? Is not the man justified in being joyful when at length his iniquity is blotted out and his transgression is covered? It is a mark of effectual calling when we receive Christ joyfully. In the case of Zacchaeus, observe that his obedience was complete, for Christ said, Today I must abide at your house and, he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully at his house, for the people murmured because Christ had gone to be his guest. Now, dear Friends, will you also receive Christ? That is the point. Are you willing to let Him come to you and be your salvation? Are you eager that He should come? Do you beg Him to Come? Depend upon it, He will come to you when you are ready to receive Himbut mind you do not trust for salvation to anything else or anyone else but Christ! Be satisfied with nothing but the ever-living Savior to be your Savior from first to last.   
There was yet one more mark of the effectual calling of Zacchaeus, and that was that He received Christ in a spiritual sense, for he did not only take Him into his house, but he took Him into his heart. I know that he did so because he began at once to purge his heart by driving out covetousness. That was a splendid way of getting rid of it when he said, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. Then he began to drive put his former grasping habit, for he said, And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore to him fourfold. That was clear evidence that he meant to receive Christ in all His holy, gracious teaching, not merely as a man and a stranger, but, spiritually, as his Master, his Ruler, his Teacher, his Guidein a word, as his Savior!   
III. Now, lastly, THIS DAYWHY NOT?   
And now, change the day altogether, for I mean this very day when I am speaking to you, this first of October in the present year of Grace, 1882. This day. This daywhy not? Why should we not, this day, give ourselves to Christ? I have tried to think of a reason why a man should not give himself up to the Lord Jesus Christ this day and I cannot find one. Then, why should he give himself to Christ this day, on this particular day? I think I know several reasons why he should do so.   
First, it is late enough. Surely you do not need to wait any longer! How old did you say you are, Friend? Seventy-six? Eighty-six? What? As old as that and not yet saved? You do not need one like me, so much younger, to urge you to a speedy decision. Or did you say that you are not more than my own agenot yet fifty? Well, I find it is quite late enough for me. There are certain influences and sensations creeping over me which make me realize that I am somewhat different from what I used to beand I expect it is the same with you. I think it is getting rather late in life for you to be still undecided. Perhaps some younger person says, But I am only twenty-one. Well, that is late enough to be without Christ! It is a thousand pities that the devil should have had 21 years of your life. I was converted to the Lord Jesus Christ when I was fifteen, but I wish it could have been 15 years before. Oh, that I had known and loved Him as soon as I knew anything and had lisped His name with the first words I ever uttered! I think every Christian will say the same. Whatever our age is, the time past may well suffice to have worked the will of the flesh. Do not you think so, my Friend? Have not you had quite enough of sin? What profit have you ever received from it? It is surely quite late enough for you to receive Christ as your Savior!   
And, further, it is late enough in the year. It seems to me, when the leaves are falling all around you, as if they all said to you, We all do fade as a leaf, is it not fully time to seek the Lord? I know of no season that seems more suited for pensive thought than just now when the year seems to be weeping itself into its tomband burying itself amid falling leaves. Now is the time to yield yourself to the Lord! There cannot be a better period than just nowbefore yet the year is fully gone.   
The mercy is, dear Friend, that though it is quite late enough, it is not too late for anybody here. There is yet time for you to seek the Lord! It is a pity to have put the Lord off until you have got into the sere and yellow leaf, but yet there is time to turn to Him! What? Have you reached the eleventh hour of life? It is late, it is very late, but still, it is not yet too late! It is not yet too late even if you are to die this weekand there are some out of this great company who will, I suppose, pass into the unseen world this week. Dear Friend, I know not who you are, but you who stand nearest to your eternal destiny, it is not yet too late even for you! I pray you, clutch at once at the great mercy now offered to you! God help you so to do!   
Every week I have to hear of some out of our number who have passed away. There have been some this last week, and some whom I certainly thought we might have had with us for a long time. They were, apparently, in good health, yet now they are to be buried at the beginning of the week, for they have gone from us quite suddenly. And why may not some of you be the next to be taken? Do not postpone your decision any longerI would that we could say tonight, This day, October 1st, some soul did receive salvation! Let the recording angel mark it down. The harvest is not quite over, though I thought it was. We down south have almost forgotten it, but there is a farming friend up with us today, who said to me, We have not finished our harvest, for we have not got the beans in yet. So, you see, the harvest is not quite over, but I do not want you to have to say, The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. I would like to get some of you to come in with the beans, just with the last crop. Oh, that you might be brought to Christ just at this end of the harvest! The Master is willing that you should come to Him even now, so do not delay. Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation!

Remember, also, that today is Gospel time. Still is Christ preached to you! The door of mercy is still set open before you! Come, is still the cry uttered by the Spirit, and the bride, the Lambs wife echoes it, Come! Still the Water of Life is freely flowing for all who are willing to receive it!   
Recollect, too, that this is praying time. You are still on praying ground. A prayer will yet find God. A traveler tells us that when he was in the East, he saw the procession of a Sultan passing through a certain city. The monarch was thereall bedizened with gems and every kind of barbaric ornament and surrounded by his guards. There was a poor wretch who wanted to get a petition to the Sultan, but he did not know how to manage it. He had no money with which to bribe the officials and he could not force his way through the armed men. So, in his desperation, he got near enough to throw the petition down at the monarchs feet, but one of the soldiers stuck a spear through it and he held it aloftand that was the end of it, for the Sultan took no notice of the incidenthe was much too great a man to attend to the petition of his poor subject. It is never so with God! Cast your petitionnow you mayat His dear feet! He will answer it and send you on your way rejoicing!   
You are not only on praying ground, for tonight seems to me to be a very auspicious season, for it is Communion time. Gods people are presently coming together around His Table to remember Christ. Will you not also remember Him? We are about to receive Christ spiritually through the emblems of bread and wine which will set Him forth to us. Why should not you also receive Christ, in a spiritual fashion, by faith, as your Savior? Oh, that you would press through the throng and bow at the feet of Jesus Christ, our Lord! If you do so, He will accept you, and again it shall be said, This day is salvation come to this house. God grant it, for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 18:35-43; 19:1-10.**

Luke 18:35-39. And it came to pass, that as He was come near unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passed by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! And they who went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. Hush, they cried, how can you disturb the blessed Masters discourse? Be quiet.

39, 40. But he cried so much the more, Son of David, have mercy on me! And Jesus stood still. Prayer held Him fast. Here is a stationary Savior, held in His place by the cries of a blind man. Oh, the power of prayer! It stays the onward march of the Son of God. Jesus stood still.

40, 41. And commanded him to be brought to Him: and when he was come near, He asked him saying, What do you want Me to do for you? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. It is a great thing to know what you really need. There are some persons who are so blind that they do not know that they are blindand because they say, We see, therefore is their blindness the more intense! I fear that there is many a person who professes to pray, yet who, if Christ should come into the room and say, What do you want Me to do for you? would not know how to answer the question. This man did. He said, very briefly, and very clearly, but in a very full way, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight. Often, the blessing from Christs lips is the echo of the prayer which fell from ours. The blind man said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. Echo answered, Receive your sight.

42, 43. Your faith has saved you. And immediately he received his sight. See how the prayer, the Word of Christ and the immediate effect of it, all tally? That I might receive my sight. Receive your sight. He received his sight.

43. And followed Him. Christ likes not blind followersand followed Him.   
43. Glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. They seemed to be greatly impressed, but we shall see that some of them soon spoke in another fashion.   
Luke 19:1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. There was to be a miracle at each end of Jericho. Long before, it had been cursed now it was to have a double blessing!   
2. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was the chief among the publicans. That is, tax-gatherers.   
2. And he was rich. As they often were, for they farmed the taxes and then squeezed every farthing they could out of the people.   
3. And he sought to see Jesus, who He was, and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. That was a fortunate thing for him. We need not all wish to be so tall as some people are. Perhaps Zacchaeus would not have gone up the sycamore tree if he had been a tall man. But the whole story turns upon something which many regard as a disadvantagehe was little of stature.   
4-7. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at your house. And he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured. There is a great contrast between this verse and the last one in the previous ChapterAll the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God. Here it is, When they saw it, they murmured. Yet, very likely many of them were the same people! Certainly they were the same sort of people that we hear of every now and then! When they saw it, they all murmured. There are far too many of that kind still about. We do not quite know who they are, nor where they arethey have a sort of nondescript, mysterious existence that finds expression in the words, They say so-and-so and so-and- so. They have been saying something about the minister, something about the Sunday school, something about the Bible class, something about your work and mine. You see, there always were such people about, and they always would talk, and their talk often took the form of complaining. When they saw it, they all murmured,   
7. Saying, He has gone to be guest with a man who is a sinner. If He had not done so, He could not have gone anywhere, for all men are sinners! All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. But this man was a sinner above others, for he had sold himself to the hated Roman power and was authorized to collect the conquerors taxes from his own people. So, of course, in the estimation of the Jews, he was the worst kind of sinner that could be found anywhere.   
8. And Zacchaeus stood. And he did not talk at all like a sinner!   
8. And said unto the Lord; Beheld, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. Some of those saints, as they reckoned themselves, had not done anything like as much as that! The half of my goods I give to the poor.   
8. And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Which restitution was an act of justiceand when charity and justice go hand in hand, what more can we expect of men?   
9, 10. And Jesus said unto him, Today is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And that day He had both sought and saved one of the lost ones, for He had found Zacchaeus up in a sycamore tree, and He had brought salvation to the tax-gatherers house. May He do the same for many who are here!

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GOOD NEWS FOR THE LOST   
NO. 1100

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 9, 1873, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10.**

THE promises of God are like stars, there is not one of them but has in its turn guided tempest-tossed souls to their desired haven. But as among the stars which stud the midnight sky there are constellations which above all others attract the mariners gaze and are helpful to the steersman, so there are certain passages in Scripture which have not only directed a few wise men to Jesus, but have been guiding stars to myriads of simple minds who have, through their help, found the port of peace. I could mention a number of texts this morning which I might compare to the pointers of the Great Bear or to the Southern Cross because they have directly pointed the penitent eye to Jesus, the Pole Star, and by looking to Him, sinners have found the way, the truth, and the life.

This text is one of the notable stars, or rather, its words form a wonderful constellation of Divine love, a very Pleiades of mercy. The words and syllables seem to glisten to my eyes with a supernal splendor. I bless God for every letter of this thrice blessed textThe Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. But as stars are of small service when the sky is all beclouded, or the air dense with fog, so it may be even such a bright Gospel light as our text will not yield comfort to souls surrounded with the clinging mists of doubts and fears. In such times mariners cry for fair weather and ask that they may be able to see the stars again.

So let us pray the Holy Spirit to sweep away, with His Divine wind, the clouds of our unbelief and enable each earnest eye in the light of God to see the light of peace. O that many awakened minds may find pardon and eternal life in the Savior this morning! God grant that in answer to the prayers now silently breathed by many, the blessing of salvation may come to this House.

I. There are four things I shall try to set forth this morning for the comfort of seeking sinners. The first is thisI would have all anxious hearts consider HOW THE OBJECTS OF MERCY ARE HERE DESCRIBEDThe Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. I feel inexpressibly grateful for this descriptionthat which was lost! There cannot be a case so bad as not to be comprehended in this word, lost. I am quite unable to imagine the condition of any man of woman born so miserable as not to be contained within the circumference of these four letterslost.

The man may have gone to a perfect extravagance of vice. He may have ruined himself body and soul. He may be upon the very verge of Hell and feel as if he were slipping into the pitbut this word descends to the lowest depth of his misery, for he is lost. Here and there upon our ironbound coasts there are harbors of refuge, but, unfortunately, some of

them are only available for large vessels at certain times of the tide. At high-water, a vessel of large tonnage may enter them and find security, but if the tide runs out strongly, even though the harbor is there, there is not enough water to enable vessels of great weight to enter.

Behold, my text is a harbor of refuge available at all tides and even at the lowest ebb the biggest ships of heaviest tonnage may enter here! No matter, though the sinner should need a fathomless ocean of mercy to boat in, there is depth enough for him here! If the wind is blowing horribly this morning and the storms are out, and all the fiends out with the storms, yet, if the tempest-tossed soul can but make sail for this Divine Harborthere is no sandbar at the mouth, no shallow water in the channelthere is no fear of its being able to enter! This harbors mouth is exceedingly deep in mercy, for the text speaks of, that which was lost. Souls lost through sin and folly are sought and saved by the Son of Man.

Let us consider how men are lost. We know, first, that they are lost by nature. However much men may rebel against the doctrine, it is a truth of Inspiration that we are lost even when we are born, and that the word, lost, has to do, not only with those who have gone into sin grossly and wickedly, but even with all mankind. Did you ever notice the other place where this text occurs? It is in the 18th chapter of Matthew and the 11th verse, and it occurs there in a very significant relationship. Let me read you the words. Christ is speaking about little children, and He says, Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.

The Lord had placed a little child in the midst of the disciples and had declared that they must be converted and become as little children. And yet He uttered these words in that connection. From that passage it is clear that, by nature, little children are lost and they owe their salvation to the Lord Jesus, when God is pleased to carry them to Heaven in infancy. Jesus is come to seek and to save those who are lost by nature and it is most certain that no man now perishes through Adams sin, only, and no man is cast into Hell because of natural depravity alonehis own personal sin and unbelief cast him there.

A far more terrible matter for us, practically, is this, that we are, apart from Divine Grace, lost by our own actions. Our nature has revealed itself in our character. Our inward inclinations have developed themselves in our conduct and we have lost ourselves by our own acts and deeds. We have erred and strayed from Gods ways willfully and wickedly like lost sheepand now the word, lost, belongs to us by our own overt acts, as well as through Adams Fall. And in addition to that, we are lost because our actual sin and our natural depravity have co-worked to produce in us an inability to restore ourselves from our fallen condition. We are not only wanderers, but we have no will to come homewe are prodigal sons, but we never say, I will arise, and go to my Father, until the Grace of God puts it into our hearts to do so. We are like sheep which wander and wander and wander, but will never, by any chance, return unless the Good Shepherd of souls shall seek us.

If this world of ours could suddenly be left to itself, could forget the centripetal force which holds it in alliance with the sun and could set out upon a fearful journey into the darkness of far-off spaceif it should travel so far away that no longer could a single beam of light reach it from the sun and it were altogether in darknessit is quite certain that it could never find the sun again, for who could light a candle upon the earth wherewith we might search for the sun? The sun can only be seen by its own light. Where upon earth would be found the bands and cords with which to draw us back to the sun? The world could only be drawn by an influence from the sun itselfthe central orb must give the motive power.

So, when a soul wanders from God, it has no light in it with which to see God and no force in it to draw God to itself. God must enlighten and draw the soul to Him. So that, in this three-fold sense, we are lost by nature, by practice, and by an utter inability to find out our God and to return to Him. Yet, terrible as this lost estate is, The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. In addition to this, we are all lost by the condemnation which our sin has brought upon us. We are sometimes told by inaccurate talkers that we are in a state of probation. My Brothers and Sisters, nothing can be more unscriptural than such a statement! We have long ago been proved and found wanting. Our probation is over. We are now, if unrenewed, in a state of condemnation!

The trial is not now pendingit is over and we are condemned, already, for our sins. The fearful sentence of condemnation hangs over every man here who has not believed in the Lord Jesus. The sinner is lost in that sense. It is but a matter of time and that time in Gods handsand the condemned man will be taken out to executionand the punishment of Divine wrath will fall upon his guilty head. We are lost because we are under legal sentence and are unable to escape from it. We cannot make atonement to God for the wrong we have done, nor avoid His righteous jurisdiction. No mortifications of the body, no lamentations of the spirit, can wipe out a single sin

*Could my tears forever flow;   
Could my zeal no respite know:   
All for sin could not atone,   
Christ must save, and Christ, alone.*

So that, being before the bar of God regarded as condemned criminals, unregenerate men are lost, indeed.

More than this, there are certain persons in the world who are lost in a more apparent sense than others areI mean that they are lost to society, to respect and perhaps to decency. That was the case with Zacchaeus, in connection with whom our text was spoken. I do not know what may have been his parentage. Possibly he was born of most reputable folk, but he showed a vicious mind and he turned aside from the good old paths. He loved low company and despised his fathers seriousness. There was great grief in that household on his account. Zacchaeus was lost to his parentsthey had hoped he would have been a credit to their namebut instead he was a dishonor. They trusted that he would be the staff of their old age, but now he was a scourge to them.

They scarcely dared to whisper his name in any company, for he had joined with the men of Belial and mingled with the lewdest sort in the city. And by-and-by, as men go from bad to worse, Zacchaeus had taken up with the low and infamous trade of a tax-gatherer. He so pushed his way in it by his sharpness and hardness of heart that he became chief of the odious band of the extortionate oppressors of the people. The Pharisees, of course, never looked at himthey passed him by as though he were a dogwhile the ordinary people of Jericho, when he was out of hearing, cursed him. Had he not exacted upon onehad he not oppressed another? His very name had a ban set upon it. He was lost to society.

But the Son of Man sought him and saved him, lost as he was! Society, to this day, has its rules, by the breach of which persons become outcasts. These rules are, some of them, commendable, but others are arbitrary, one-sided, cruel and hypocritical. We have sometimes heard men of the world ridicule what they are pleased to call the cant of the Church, but we take leave to say that there is no cant so desperately canting as the cant of the world. There occurred, not long ago, an instance of the worlds relentless cruelty to those whom it is fashionable to brand with dishonor. A person who had, perhaps, fallen into sin in her earlier days, was restored to a respectable positionshe was received in society among the noblest, but all of a sudden, dastardly lips revealed a secretand a sin committed far back was raked up against her. From that day the world put away the woman, never asking her if she had repented, or taking her after-conduct into consideration.

The world is so pure and chaste and immaculate, that it shut out the erring one as if she had been a leper. Though itself reeking with foulest abominations, society feigns a virtuousness pure as the lily and chaste as the snow. The world is cold, hard, cruel towards a certain class of offenders. It receives into its embraces men who are, every inch of them, uncleanbut a betrayed, deceived, broken-hearted woman the world shakes off as if she were a viper. This is the society which boasts its gallantry! This is the just, fair-dealing world! It caresses its noble rakes, but casts off the most penitent among the betrayed. Ah, hypocritical, canting world! Ah, hollow, lying world, to pretend to a virtue which you do not know! Rail not at the inconsistencies of religious men while your own are so glaring! Cruel tyrant, learn mercy and do justice before you become a judge of the servants of the Lord!

Now, the Son of man is come to seek and to save those whom the world puts outside its camp. The world says, No. Shame on her. We will not speak to her. But Christ Jesus says, I have come to pardon her, and to restore her, and she shall love Me much because much has been forgiven her! There are other cases in which men, by their crimes, most justly place themselves outside the pale of society and for the preservation of order they are separated from the company of honest men. Now even these should have a door of hope left to them and a way of return. The cry, too often is, Down with him! Down with him! He has sinned against his fellow men. Put him aside! What do we care what becomes of him?

But the Son of Man who is infinitely pure and holy, who has a genuine horror of sin so that He really hates it and loathes it, yet does not loathe sinners, but has come to seek and to save them! The sweep of Divine compassion is not limited by the customs of mankind! The boundaries of Jesus love are not to be fixed by Pharisaical self-righteousness! The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Putting all that we have said into a few words, we would thus speakI may be addressing persons here who feel that they have broken Gods Laws, perhaps by no means publicly or in any of the grosser vices, but they have broken the Laws of God.

They may feel that they have and are sorrowing in their hearts because of it. They fear, also, that they have sinned in such a way that it cannot be possible for them to be forgiven. At the same time the hardness of their hearts astounds themthey feel themselves to be altogether bad and that no good thing dwells within them. They, therefore, despair of being saved. Beloved Friends, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Does not the description suit you? Are you not among the lost? Well then, you are among such as Jesus Christ came to save! And if perchance there should be one here who has fallen into the grosser vices, someone who has sullied his name and degraded himself to the very lowest degree, I am bound not to restrict the text and I do not desire to do soThe Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

O you lost ones! O you ruined and destroyed ones! The Son of Man is come to seek and to save you! The Greek word here used for lost is a form of that word which has, by certain modern discoverers, been translated, annihilated, with a view to buttressing their unscriptural theory of the annihilation of the wicked. It is one of those instances in which the absurdity of such an interpretation ought to be evident even to themselves! The Son of Man has not come to seek and to save that which is annihilatedthat would be rank nonsense! But the word is very forcible and signifies a destruction very terrible, a ruin of the most solemn kind. To be lost is to be fallen altogether, to be destroyed as to all good, to be utterly undone, yet the Lord Jesus Christ is come to seek and to save such as are in this wretched plight!

Why, this text sounds to me like the ringing of joyful Sunday bells which sometimes mariners have heard at sea! Ships are sometimes surrounded with a dense fog and the mariners know not whether they are near the land or on the wide oceanthey lie becalmed with no stir in the air, no stir in the seathe ship is like a lost thing without power of motion or knowledge of her whereabouts. And then suddenly the mariners have heard bells ringing on the blessed Sunday and as the silver sounds have pierced the gloomy mist the mariners have known that they were somewhere near Old Englands happy shores!

My text rings out most sweetly through the fogs of your souls despair and doubt and I trust the glad message The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lostwill reach you!

II. Now, let us turn to another point. There is very much of consolation in our text for the guilty, in the second place, if they notice HOW THE SAVIOR IS HERE DESCRIBED, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. As the Son of Man He is come. And here note, first of all, His Deity. You say, Deity, how is that? The text says the Son of Man. Yes, and that is the point upon which I ground my remark. No

Prophet or Apostle needed to call himself by way of distinction the son of man. It would be ridiculous for any one of us to speak of himself emphatically as the son of manit would be an affectation of condescension supremely absurd.

Therefore, when we hear our Lord particularly and especially calling Himself by this name, we are compelled to think of it as contrasted with His higher Nature and we see a deep condescension in His choosing to be called the Son of Man, when He might have been called the Son of God. O my Soul, He who is come to save you, is so plainly God that He sees reason to remind you that He is also the Son of Man, lest you should doubt it! No angels arm is stretched out for your help, but the arm of Him who created all worlds!

In speaking of Himself as the Son of Man, our Lord shows us that He has come to us in a condescending Character. Not in flames of fire has Jesus descended from Heaven. Not in His chariot of wrath, girt with the sword of vengeance, does Jehovah Jesus come to men. He is come upon His errand of mercy as One who has lain upon a womans breast, who has known weakness, suffering and need. He is come as One who knows, by personal experience, the lowliness of your estate. Oh, Sinner, is it not joy to know that the Son of God has come to save you as the Son of Man? The Son of Manthat describes also the tenderness of His Character.

A man can sympathize with a man. Jesus, the tender-hearted One, was full of sympathy and in loving gentleness He is come to save sinners. He is no stern Rhadamanthus, no judge of severe countenance, no Draco with bloody edicts, but Jesus, the Man of Sorrows and the acquaintance of grief. It is as your Brother, touched with a feeling of your infirmities, that Jesus comes to you. He has, moreover, come in His mediatorial Character, for, There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. He can put His hand upon you, and, at the same time, lay His hand upon God. He who bridges the gulf between the misery of fallen manhood and the eternal dignity of the unsullied God is come to save the lost! What a joy is this!

Our Lord is come in His representative Character, for He calls Himself the Son of Man, as if to note that He is Man for men, the representative Man, the Son of Man. He is come as the Covenant Substitute, representing Man. He has suffered in our place, died in our place, paid our debts in our place, risen in our place, and gone to Heaven as our Forerunner! It is the Son of Man who, in all things, has acted for men, who is, come to seek and to save that which was lost. Now, it seems to me, dear Friends, if the Spirit of God would only help poor troubled hearts to see it, that the wording of this part of my text, though very simple, is full of the richest consolation.

Soul, what an attractive Savior have you to deal with! God is a consuming fireyou cannot, O guilty one, go to Himbut Jesus is your Brother, your Friend. He is the Friend of Sinners who received them and ate with them. And He it is, great as He is, who is come to seek and to save that which was lost. I tell you what I would have you do. Go to Him without fear or trembling before yon sun goes down and ends this day of mercy. Go and tell Him you have broken the Fathers Lawstell Him that you are lost and you need to be saved. Tell Him that He is a Man, and appeal to His manly heart and to His brotherly sympathies.

Pour out your broken heart at His feetlet your soul flow over in His Presenceand I tell you He cannot cast you away! Though your prayers are feeble as the spark in the flax, He will not quench them! And though your heart is bruised like a reed, He will not break it! May the Holy Spirit bless you with a desire to go to God through Jesus Christ. And may He encourage you to do so by showing that Jesus is meek and lowly of heart, gentle, and tender, and full of pity.

III. I pass on to our third point and that, also, is full of comfort, though I will only touch upon it. You that seek salvation should joyfully observe HOW OUR LORDS PAST ACTION IS DESCRIBEDThe Son of Man is come. Note, not, shall come, but, IS come. His coming is a fact accomplished. We could not have said this before the days of Bethlehems wondrous birth. We would have had to say the Son of Man will come, and then you would have needed extraordinary faith to believe that the Son of God would become the Son of Man to save you. But He is come. That part of the salvation of a sinner which is yet to be done is not at all so hard to be believed as that which the Lord has already accomplished.

That Jesus Christ, after being Incarnate, and after having suffered for sin, should pardon sinners for whom He has died does not seem to me to be extraordinarythe extraordinary matter lies in this, that He should come from Heaven, that He should be born in Bethlehem, that He should tarry here on earth, that He should go up to the Cross and down to the grave and bear and suffer in the sinners placeyet, our Lord has done all that. The greatest part of the work He has accomplished! Your salvation, if you believe in Jesus, is comparatively an easy matterHe has but to apply that which is already prepared and hand over to your faith that which He has laid by in store.

The state of the case since Jesus has come may be illustrated thus Certain of our fellow countrymen were the prisoners of the Emperor Theodore, in Abyssinia, and I will suppose myself among them as a captive. I hear that the British Parliament is stirring in the direction of an expedition for my deliverance and I feel some kind of comfort, but I am very anxious, for I know that amidst party strifes in the House of Commons many good measures are shipwrecked. Days and months pass wearily on, but at last I hear that Sir Robert Napier has landed with a delivering army. Now my heart leaps for joy! I am shut up within the walls of Hagdala but in my dungeon I hear the sound of the British bugle and I know that the deliverer is come! Now I am full of confidence and am sure of liberty! If the general is already come, my rescue is certain!

Mark well, then, O you prisoners of hope, that Jesus is come! Do you not hear it? The Gospel bugle is sounding! Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! The Captain of our salvation is come! He is at our dungeon gates! He has come to our rescue! He is come! He is come! Jesus has come and by His Holy Spirit He is still here! And we may depend upon it, that if He has actually come to the work, He means to go through with it, for He never draws back His hand. When He said He would save men, it was certain He would do so. And now He has come to do it, it is more

than certain!

Behold the Lord of Glory has disrobed Himself for work. He has hung up His royal robes and put on a workmans garb, a human toilers garments! He means work, stern, persevering work. He has cast His azure mantle across the sky and come down here to the city of David robed in mortal clay to wear the garment without seam. O, Sirs, He means to do His Fathers business! He is in real earnest, be sure of thatHe has come to do it and means to accomplish His design of love. Besides, He is not like a foolish one who comes to His work and leaves His tools behind HimJesus would not come unprepared! The Son of Man is an infinitely wise Savior and you may depend upon it, having come with His Fathers consent and anointed with the Holy Spirit, He is come with everything that is needed to accomplish His purpose.

He is come to do a work which He can do and will do, and in which He will not be baffled though all the powers of earth and Hell should contend with Him. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. My heart rejoices as I feel how sure it is that the lost ones will be saved. If we had heard the sons of the morning sing in solemn symphony, God Himself has come to scatter the primeval darkness, to bring order out of chaos, and to create life in the earth which lies without form and void, we should have felt certain of the result! If God had come to create, He would createand it would have been no matter of surprise to us to have seen the round earth glowing in the morning light, verdant with newborn vegetation and populous with variety of life.

We are sure that what God comes to do He will do. In the night when Israel was pursued by the Egyptians and overtaken at the sea, even at the Red Sea, it was a sign of victory when the Lord came to deliver His people. The pillar of cloud went to the rear, turning its black side on the foe and its bright side on the chosen. God was come to smite Pharaoh and to rebuke the proud tyrant! And oh, you might be sure He would do itfailure was out of the question. When, next morning, the placid deep swept over the angry armies and all was peace where Pharaoh and his hosts had raged so furiouslyand instead of the shouts of men-at-armswere heard the sweet voices of damsels, singing, Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, it was but natural it should be so, for if God came to avenge His Israel! Who could stand before Him?

The Son of Man is come to save. Rejoice, you heavens, and be glad, O earth! He will do all His pleasure! Neither earth nor Hell can stand against Him! Seeking, He will save! Yes, He will save that which is lost! All glory be unto His name!

IV. The last point is to be thisthere is much of deepest comfort in THE DESCRIPTION WHICH IS HERE GIVEN OF OUR LORDS WORK. He is come to seek and to save. The enterprise is one, but has two branches. I would have you first notice what our Lord has not come to do. He has not come to aid those who, in their own esteem, are almost as good as they ought to be, to become a little better and so to enter Heaven by their own efforts. I believe that such is the general persuasion of mankind. If they were to put their beliefs into plain English their notion is as nearly as possible what I have said. According to them you are to attend a place of worship regularly, say prayers, give to the poor and be as good as ever you can. And then, inasmuch as there will be a little bit in which you will be lacking, you are to trust to Jesus Christ to make up the rest.

Now, mark my word, this is a gross and fatal delusion! There is not between the two covers of this Bible one single word of hope held out to any man who believes in that mannerno, but there is the solemn utterance that Christ has not come to save people of that sort at all, for thus it is writtenThe whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse. If any of you are very good people and have no sins. If you have done no wrong and are nearly as good as you ought to be. If you only need just to say a little about the blood of Christ, Christ has not come to save such as you areHe has come to seek and to save that which was lost. If you are not lost you have no part nor lot in this matter!

Moreover, the Lord Jesus has not come to aid us in self-sufficient endeavors to save ourselves. I wonder how Christian people can sing that verse

*A charge to keep I have,   
A God to glorify;   
A never-dying soul to save,   
And fit it for the sky.*

It might suit a Jew at the foot of Sinai, but a Christian should have none of it! If we have to save our own souls it is all over with us. What? Can we fit our souls for the sky? We, save our own souls? Why, this is the clean opposite of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The theory of some is that there is much natural goodness in men and they have only to work it out and gradually improve themselves into a state of Grace. No, Sir, you are on the wrong tack. Do you know what is the very first ceremony of the Christian religion?

Yes, you say, Baptism. So it is. And what is Baptism? Buried with Christ in Baptism. Who are buried, then? Living people? No! Dead people. The very first lesson of the Gospel, after believing in Christ, is that you are, before the Law, dead, through having been crucified with Christ, and therefore you must be buried. There is no improving your old nature, mending it up and beautifying it into perfectionthe thing is hopeless, and it must die and be buried! The Scripture does not say, You must be improved. You must be born-againthat is quite another thing. You must be made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. A new creation is needednot an improvement of the old creature.

What does the Apostle say?The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not reconciled to God, neither, indeed, can be. There he ends it Neither, indeed, can be. It is all over with the flesh, for corruption has seized upon it. This the Believer accepts as fact, because, says the Apostle, we thus judge, that if One died for all, then all died. The death of Jesus, as a punishment for sin, was our death and we died in Him so that we now live as new men, and risen men, and not as though the old life had been improved into something better! The old nature is put into the

place of death and then the man receives life in Christthat is how we are savednot by improving ourselves into something better, but by being newly created by the Divine power of the Holy Spirit.

Very discouraging, says one. Yes! And such discouragement is much needed now-a-days. If I saw a man trying to climb to the top of a mountain by a path which was quite impassable and full of dangers, I should be his true friend if I discouraged him from dashing himself to pieces. The way to Heaven is not by our own works. You who think that you can climb to Heaven by the way of Sinai should look to the flames that Moses saw and sink and tremble, and despair! There is no road to God by the way of Sinai! There, at Calvary, is the wayall crimson with the Saviors blood. Salvation is ours through His atoning SacrificeFor the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Now, having cleared away the rubbish, let us come to the Truth of God. Jesus is come to seek the lost. He did that personally. There was a lost woman at Samaria and Jesus said He must go through Samaria. There was a lost man at Jericho and Jesus said He must abide in that mans house. What He did personally He now does under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, in His Providence. Sometimes Providence takes away a child, lays a man on a bed of sickness, deprives him of his wealthand all these trials are intended to bring him to Jesus. It is Jesus seeking him. It is an odd thing, my Friend, that you should be here this morningyou did not reckon upon being here. Strange circumstances brought you.

Suppose the Lord means to save you this morning? Then the Providence which brought you to this spot is Jesus seeking you. As our Lord seeks souls by His Providence He also seeks them by the Word. It is very wonderful how the Word of God will come home to people. It is a part of every preachers business, who is sent of God, so to preach that persons in the congregation may perceive that he speaks of them. What remarkable things have happened in our ministry and in the ministries of all who are sent of God.

Why, they speak to people as if they knew them! Though they never saw them before, they tell their case and picture their state. God guides His servants and gives them words that they never thought of till the time came to utter them, so that on the spur of the moment they pick out the character as well as if they had known the man from childhood! Thus Jesus seeks the sinner. If there is anything in this sermon which suits your case, dear Friend, do not talk about what relation it may have to anybody else, but be sure Jesus is seeking you! Are you a lost one? Have you come here in such a condition of heart that you cannot deny your lost state? Jesus is seeking you!

Look how the Lord saved Zacchaeus. It seemed an odd thing that when the Lord was under the tree, He should look up and say, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down. But Jesus does the same thing, still, in the preaching of the Gospel. He applies the Word with power to individual consciences and makes men perceive that He speaks of them. God has a message of love to their souls and they are compelled to hear itthey cannot shut their ears to itthey must receive it for the Spirit of God comes with it and sends it home with power to their soul. That is Jesus seeking sinners. And whom Jesus seeks He saves.

There is the second part of itTo seek and to save. And how is the saving done? That is done, first of all, by the complete pardon of all the sinners sins. The very instant that a man trusts Christ with all his heart, the past is blotted out as if it had never existedall the sins he has ever committed in thought, in word, in deed, however crimson in color, go at oncethey are sunk as in the sea, never to be found again. And this is done upon this one solitary conditionthat the sinner believe in Jesus! And even that is not a

condition, for He that bade him believe enables him to believe and gives him the faith which saves his soul!

Then the sinner is saved in another way. From the moment that a person believes in Jesus his nature becomes different from what it was beforehe receives a new heartanother influence takes possession of him. Another love engrosses him. When a man is absorbed by some masterpassion, what a different man he becomes! The passion for wealth will work marvels! We have known idle persons become very diligent and profuse voluptuaries become even self-denying and mortifying to their flesh in their ambition to acquire riches. Now, God gives us another passionthe passion of gratitude to Christ, and love to the God that saved usand that becomes a master-principle and rules the entire man.

He who loved self now loves God and lives for Him. And is that change possible to the most degraded? Yes, possible with God. If a man has committed every crime in the whole catalog of villainy and his heart has become hard as the nether millstoneand his disposition altogether base, mean, groveling, sensual and devilishthe Spirit of God can turn that man, in a single moment, into a lover of that which is true and right and just! He can break his heart concerning the past, make him angry with himself for having lived as he has done and can passionately inflame him with the desire to be perfectly holy!

And that passion within the man can carry him on until he loves his fellow creatures as himself and makes great sacrifices for themand all for the sake of Jesus, that blessed, crucified Son of Man, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. We do not preach that Christ forgives men and then lets them live as before. But we assert that the moment He gives the pardon of sin, He gives the new nature, too. The Gospel hospital is not merely a place where lepers are harbored, but where lepers are healed The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Brothers and Sisters, let us cry to Jesus this morning to save us! I will put myself down among the lost by nature and by practice. If there is no one else here that is lost by nature, I am such, and I bless my Lord that He is come to seek and to save me, a lost man. Brothers and Sisters, some of you have known His love for many years. Did you not come at first to Him as lost ones? And will you not confess, this morning, that were it not for His infinite mercy you would still be as lost as ever? What a mercy it is to know we are lost and to trust to Christ who saves the lost! What a blessing to be among the dead who died in Christ, whose life is a new life in Himfor you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in

God.

Martin Luther speaks in his book on Galatians of cutting the devils head off with his own swordThere, says Martin to the devil, you say I am a great sinner. I thank you for that, for Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and so I feel He came to save me. And if the devil says to any one of you this morning, You are lost altogether, off with his head, my Brother, my Sisterwith his own sword, and this very day rejoice that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Is there anyone here who is not lost? Anyone in this congregation who does not need saving? Well, then, I cannot say, in Gods name, a single word of consolation to you. You are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, so you say. But this is what the Lord says to youHe has put down the mighty from their seat, and He has exalted them of low degree: He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away. That is the only Gospel for you! But every poor, heavyladen, troubled heartand every soul that feels itself to be lost by nature has this gracious wordThe Son of Man is come to seek and to gave that which was lost.

The last word is thisLet us who are saved seek the lost ones. Jesus did it. O follower of Jesus, do likewise! Is there any work that you could undertake among the worst of people? Undertake it! Never be ashamed of mingling with the poorest of the poor and the vilest of the vile, for Christs sake. I always feel intense satisfaction at the remembrance of such useful members of our Church as Brother Orsman, engaged as he is from day to day in the very worst part of London, in Golden Lane, seeking that which is lost.

I hope there are many here imitating him. I know there are some. There is room for many more laborers in that department to seek those that are lostpre-eminently lost. You need not, however, go to Golden Lane, or Seven Dialsthere are plenty of lost people around youlost people who come to the Tabernacle, lost people who go to Church and lost people who go nowhere on Sunday. Go and seek them! If you are saved yourself, I beseech you by the blood that bought you, by the Christ who loved you, and by the Christ whom you love, go out this very day to seek and to save that which was lost! Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE, SERMONLuke 19:1-27.   
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THE MISSION OF THE SON OF MAN (Particular Redemption) NO. 204

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 11, 1858, **BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10.**

How fond our Master was of the sweet title, the Son of Man! If He had chosen, He might always have spoken of Himself as the Son of God, the Everlasting Father, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Prince of Peace. He has a thousand gorgeous titles, resplendent as the throne of Heaven, but He cares not to use them. To express His humility and let us see the lowliness of Him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light, He calls not Himself the Son of God, but He speaks of Himself evermore as the Son of Man who came down from Heaven.

Let us learn a lesson of humility from our Savior. Let us never court great titles, nor proud degrees. What are they, after all, but beggarly distinctions whereby one worm is known from another? He that has the most of them is a worm still and is in nature no greater than his fellows. If Jesus called Himself the Son of Man when He had far greater names, let us learn to humble ourselves unto men of low estate, knowing that he that humbles himself shall in due time be exalted.

Methinks, however, there is a sweeter thought than this in that name, Son of Man. It seems to me that Christ loved manhood so much that He always desired to honor it. And since it is a high honor and, indeed, the greatest dignity of manhood that Jesus Christ was the Son of Man, He desires to display this name, that He may, as it were, put rich stars upon the breast of manhood and put a crown upon its head. Son of Man whenever He said that word He seemed to put a halo round the head of Adams children.

Yet there is perhaps a more lovely thought still. Jesus Christ called Himself the Son of Man because He loved to be a man. It was a great stoop for Him to come from Heaven and to be Incarnate. It was a mighty stoop of condescension when He left the harps of angels and the songs of cherubim to mingle with the vulgar herd of His own creatures. But condescension though it were, He loved it. You will remember that when He became incarnate He did not become so in the dark. When He brings forth the only begotten into the world He said, Let all the angels of God worship Him.

It was told in Heaven. It was not done as a dark secret which Jesus Christ would do in the night that none might know it. But all the angels of God were brought to witness the advent of a Savior a span long, sleeping upon a Virgins breast and lying in a manger. And ever afterwards and even now, He never blushed to confess that He was Mannever looked

back upon His incarnation with the slightest regret. He always regarded it with a joyous recollection, thinking Himself thrice happy that He had ever become the Son of Man. All hail blessed Jesus! We know how much You love our race. We can well understand the greatness of Your mercy towards Your chosen ones, inasmuch as You are evermore using the sweet name which acknowledges that they are bone of Your bone and flesh of Your flesh and You are one of them, a Brother and a near kinsman!

Our text announces as a declaration of our Savior, that He, the Son of Man, is come to seek and to save that which was lost. In addressing you this morning I shall simply divide my discourse thusFirst, I shall lay it down as a self-evident Truth, that whatever was the intention of Christ in His coming into the world that intention most certainly shall never be frustrated. We shall then in the second place, look into the intention of Christ, as announced in the text, viz., to seek and to save that which was lost. Then, in concluding, we shall derive a word of comfort and perhaps one of warning, from the intention of our Savior in coming into the world to seek and to save that which was lost.

I. You are aware that there has been a very great discussion among all Christians about the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is one class of men who believe in what is called general redemption, affirming it to be an undoubted truth that Jesus Christ has shed His blood for every man and that the intention of Christ in His death was the salvation of men considered as a whole. They have, however, to overlook the fact that in this case Christs intention would be frustrated in a measure.

There are others of us who hold what is called the doctrine of Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement We conceive that the blood of Christ was of an infinite value, but that the intention of the death of Christ never was the salvation of all men. For if Christ had designed the salvation of all men, we hold that all men would have been saved. We believe that the intention of Christs death is just equal to its effects, and therefore I start this morning by announcing what I regard to be a self-evident Truththat whatever was the intention of Jesus Christ in coming into the worldthat intention most certainly shall be fulfilled.

But I shall make use of a few arguments to strengthen this doctrine, although I believe that on the very first announcement it commends itself to every thinking mind.

In the first place, it seems to be inconsistent with the very idea of God that He should ever intend anything which should not be accomplished. When I look at man I see him to be a creature so distracted with folly and so devoid of power that I do not wonder that he often begins to build and is not able to finish. I do not marvel that full often he stops short because he has not counted the cost. I wonder not, when I think how much there is that is above mans control that he should sometimes propose but that God should dispose far differently from his proposition.

I see man to be the insect of a day, a mere speck upon the bay leaf of existence. And when I see him as a mere drop in the great sea of creation, I do not wonder that when he is ambitious he sometimes fashions in himself great designs which he is unable to accomplish because the wheels of Providence and destiny will often run quite contrary to all the frolic of his will. But when I think of God whose name is, I AM that I AM, the selfexistent One, in whom we live and move and have our being, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the Almighty God. When I think of Him as filling immensity, having all power and strength, knowing all things, having a fullness of wisdomI cannot associate with such an idea of God the supposition of His ever failing in any of His intentions.

It would seem to me that a God who could intend a thing and fail in His intention would not be Godbut be a thing like ourselvesperhaps superior in strength, but certainly not entitled to worship. I cannot think of God as a true and real God like Jehovah, except as a Being who wills and it is accomplished. Who speaks and it is done. Who commands and it stands fastforeversettled in Heaven. I cannot therefore imagine, since Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that in His atonement and redemption His real intention and desire can in any way be frustrated. If I were a Socinian and believed Jesus Christ to be a mere man, I could, of course, imagine that the result of His redemption would be uncertain. But believing that Jesus Christ was very God of very God, equal and co-eternal with the Father, I dare not, lest I should be guilty of presumption and blasphemy, associate with that name of Jehovah Jesus any suspicion that the design of His death shall remain unaccomplished.

But again, we have before us the fact, that up to now, all the works of God have accomplished their purpose. Whenever God has uttered by the lips of His servants a prophecy, it has surely come to pass. The instruments of accomplishing that purpose have often been the most factious and rebellious of men. They had no intention whatever of serving God. They have run contrary to His Laws. But you will observe that when they have dashed wildly along, His bit has been still in their mouth and His bridle in their jaws.

A great monarch has acted like leviathan in the seahe has moved himself wherever he pleased. He has seemed mighty among the sons of menall the rest of mankind were as minnows, while he was a huge leviathan. But we discover that God has been overruling his thoughts, that He has been in his council chamber, that the wildest speculations of his ambition have, after all, been but the fulfilling of Jehovahs stern decrees. Look abroad through all the nations of the earth and tell meis there one prophecy of God that has failed? May He not still say, Not one of them has lost her mate?

Every Word of God has certainly been accomplished. The kings of the earth stood up and took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break His bands asunder and cast His cords from us. But He that sits in the heavens did laugh at them. The Lord did have them in derision. Still He worked His own sovereign will. Let them do as they pleased, God was over them all, reigning and ruling evermore. If, then, Gods purpose in Providence certainly never has been frustrated, am I to imagine that Gods purpose in the glorious sacrifice of Jesus Christ shall be null and void?   
If there are any of you who have arrived at such a contortion of intellect as to conceive that a less work being accomplished, a greater one shall fail, I must leave you to yourselves. With you I could not argueI should think you incapable of an argument. Surely, if God the Master, the Judge, the King, has in all things done according to His own pleasure in this lower world, in the mere creation and preservation of men, it is not to be dreamed of for a moment, that when He stoops Himself from the highest Heaven, to give His own hearts blood for our redemption, He shall in that be foiled! No, though earth and Hell are against Him, every purpose of Jesus on the Cross shall be consummated and as the price was finished, so shall the purchase be. As the means were fully provided, so shall the end be accomplished to its utmost jot and tittle.

But again, I invite you to stand at the foot of the Cross and take a view of Jesus Christ. And then I will put it to you whether you can imagine that Jesus Christ could in any measure have died in vain. Come, Believer, place yourself in the garden of Gethsemane, hide yourself among those dark olives and listen to yonder Man who is in agony. Do you hear those groans? They are the groans of an incarnate God. Do you hear those sighs? They are the sighs of the Son of Man, God over all, blessed forever. Do you hear those strong cries and do you see those tears? They are the crying and the tears of Him who is equal with His Father, but who condescended to be a Man.

Rise, for He has risen, Judas has betrayed Him and taken Him away. Look on that ground. Do you see those clots of gore? It is the bloody sweat of the Man Christ Jesus. I beseech you, answer this question. Standing in the garden of Gethsemane, with those blood clots staining the white frost of that cold midnight, can you believe that one of those clots of blood shall fall to the ground and not effect its purpose? I challenge you, O Christian, whatever your doctrinal opinions, to say to me, Yes, to such a question as that!

Can you imagine that a sweat of blood from the veins of incarnate Deity shall ever fall to the ground and fail? Why, Beloved, the Word of God which comes forth out of His mouth shall not return unto Him void, but it shall accomplish that which He pleases. How much more shall the Great WORD of God, which came forth from the loin of Deity, accomplish the purpose whereunto God has sent Him, and prosper in the thing for which it pleased God to ordain Him!?

But now come with me to the hall of judgment. See there your Master placed in mock state in the midst of a ribald band of soldiers. Do you see how they spit on those blessed cheeks, how they pluck His hair, how they buffet Him? Do you see the crown of thorns with its ruby drops of gore? Hark! Can you hear the cry of the multitude, as they say, Crucify Him, crucify Him? And will you now stand there and look at this Man whom Pilate has just brought forth, still bleeding from the lash of the scourge, covered with shame and spit and mockery and as this Ecce Homo is presented to you, will you believe that this, the incarnate Son of God, shall be made such a spectacle to men, to angels and to devilsand yet fail of His design?

Can you imagine that one lash of that whip shall have a fruitless aim? Shall Jesus Christ suffer this shame and spitting and yet endure what was far worsea disappointment in the fulfillment of His intentions? No, God forbid! No! By Gethsemane and Gabbatha, we are pledged to the strong belief that what Christ designed by His death must certainly be accomplished.

Then again, see him hanging on His Cross. The nails have pierced His hands and feet and there in the broiling sun He hangsHe hangs to die. The mockery has not ceased. Still they put out the tongue and wag the head at Him. Still they taunt Him with, If you are the Son of God come down from the Cross. And now His bodily pains increase, while His souls anguish is terrible even unto death. Christian, can you believe that the blood of Christ was shed in vain? Can you look at one of those precious drops as it trickles from His head or His hands or His feet and can you imagine that it shall fall to the ground and perish there? Trust the waters may fail from the sea, the sun may grow dim with age, but I never can imagine that the value, the merit, the power of the blood of Jesus ever shall die out, or that its purpose shall be unaccomplished. It seems to me as clear as noonday, that the design of the Saviors death must certainly be fulfilledbe it what it may.

I might use a hundred other arguments. I might show that every attribute of Christ declares that His purpose must be accomplished. He certainly has love enough to accomplish His design of saving the lost, for He has a love that is bottomless and fathomless, even as the abyss itself. He certainly has no objection to the accomplishment of His own design, for, As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live. And certainly the Lord cannot fail for want of power, for where there is omnipotence there can be no deficiency of strength.

Nor again can the design be unaccomplished because it was unwise, for Gods designs cannot be unwise, simply because they are of Godthat is to saythey are of infinite wisdom. I cannot see anything in the Character of Christ, nor anything the wide world over, that can for one moment make me imagine that Christ should die and yet it should be said afterwards, This Man died for a purpose which He never lived to see accomplishedthe object of His death was only partially fulfilled. He saw of the travail of His soul, but He was not satisfied, for He did not redeem all whom He intended to redeem.

Now, some persons love the doctrine of universal atonement because they say it so beautiful. It is a lovely idea that Christ should have died for

all men. It commends itself, they say, to the instincts of humanity. There is something in it full of joy and beauty. I admit there is. But beauty may be often associated with falsehood. There is much which I might well admire in the theory of universal redemption but let me just tell you what the supposition necessarily involves. If Christ on His Cross intended to save every man, then He intended to save those who were damned before He died. If the doctrine is true, that He died for all men, He died for some that were in Hell before He came into this world, for doubtless there were

myriads there that had been cast away.

Once again, if it were Christs intention to save all men, how deplorably has He been disappointed! We have His own evidence that there is a lake that burns with fire and brimstone and into that pit must be cast some of the very persons who, according to that theory, were bought with His blood. That seems to me a thousand times more frightful than any of those horrors which are said to be associated with the Calvinistic and Christian doctrine of Particular Redemption.

To think that my Savior died for men in Hell seems a supposition too horrible for me to imaginethat He was the Substitute for the sons of men and that God having first punished the Substitute punished men again, seems to me to be in conflict with any idea of justice. That Christ should offer an atonement and satisfaction for the sins of men and that afterwards those very men should be punished for the sins which Christ had already atoned for, seems to me, to be the most marvelous monstrosity that ever could have been imputed to Saturn, to Janus, yes, to the god of the Thugs, or the most diabolical heathen demons. God forbid that we should ever think thus of Jehovah, the Just and Wise. If Christ has suffered in mans stead, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and save us from all unrighteousness.

II. I have thus stated the first thought that the intention of Christs death cannot be frustrated. And now methinks everyone will anxiously listen and every ear will be attentive and the question will arise from every heart, WHAT THEN, WAS THE INTENTION OF THE SAVIORS DEATH? AND IS IT POSSIBLE THAT I CAN HAVE A PORTION IN IT? For whom, then, did the Savior dieand is there the slightest probability that I have some lot or portion in that great atonement which He has offered? Beloved, my text is the answer to the questionThe Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Now, our text tells us two things first, the subjects of the Saviors atonement, the lost. And, secondly, the purpose of itHe came to seek and save.

I must now endeavor to pick out the objects of the Saviors atonement. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Some of you may turn your heads away at once and conclude that up to now you have given no evidence that you have any portion in the death of Christ. You are very good sort of people. You never did much that was wrongperhaps a little now and then. But nothing particular ever troubles your conscience. You have a notion that you shall certainly enter into the kingdom of Heaven, for you are no worse than your neighbors and if you are not saved, God help other people! If you do not go to Heaven, who will?

You are trusting in your own good works and believing you are righteous. Now let us decide your case at once. Since you are ashamed to put yourselves among those who are lost, I have no Christ to preach to you till you are ready to come and confess that you are lost. For Christ himself tells us that He came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And inasmuch as you belong to the righteous and trust in yourselves that you are good and excellent, you may turn upon your heel and go. In the blood of Christ there is no portion for men who live and die trusting in their own self-righteousness.

But I may dismiss another part of you. Some of you are saying, Well, Sir, I know I am guilty, but still I am persuaded that by attention to the Law of God, I shall certainly be able to take away the demerit of my guilt. I intend henceforward to reform and I believe that by a consistent course of attention to religious ordinances and by carefully regarding that which is right and wrong between God and man, and man and man, I shall, without doubt, make an atonement for the sins of the past. Ah, my Friend, up to now you give me no hope that you have any portion in the death of Christ. Christ came not to die for men who can save themselves without Him. If you think you can save yourself remember the door of mercy is shut in your face.

Christ came to bring robes from Heaven, but not for you who can spin for yourselves. He came to bring bread for the hungry, but He will give none of it to you who can sow and reap and make bread for yourselves. Christ helps the helpless, but they who can help themselves and have sufficient of their own strength and merit to carry them to Heaven may fight their way there alone, if they canthey shall have no help from Him. Whom, then, did Christ die to save? It is said, He came to save that which was lost.

Now, you must bear with me while I run over the different ways in which a man may be lost. And then I will conclude by noticing the term as it is used in the proper sense. We may affirm that Christ died for the lost. We know that all men are lost in Adamas soon as we are born into this world, we are lost. When the tiny boat of the infant is launched upon the river of life it is lost. Unless Sovereign Grace shall stretch forth its hand and save it in infancy and carry it to Heaven or save it afterwards, when it shall have grown upthat infant is lost. Behold, says David, I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. In sin did my mother conceive me. In Adam all die. The Fall of Adam was the fall of the human race. Then you and I and all of us fell down.

Again, we are all lost by practice. No sooner does the child become capable of knowing right and wrong than you discover that he chooses the evil and abhors the good. Early passions soon break out like weeds immediately after the shower of rainspeedily the hidden depravity of the heart makes itself manifest and we grow up to sin and so we become lost by practice. But mark, a man may be lost in Adam and lost by practice and yet be saved by Christ. Christ is able to save youthough you are twice lostHis salvation is able to redeem you from death.

Then there are some who go further still. The deadly tree of sin grows taller and taller and some become lost to the Church. After having been trained up religiously in our midst, they turn asidethey give up all outward regard to the worship of God. The ministry of the Gospel is neglected, the house of prayer is forsaken and the Church tolls its bell and says of such an one, He is lost to the Church. Some go further still. They are lost to society. I have seen many who are dead while they live. We have in the midst of us the harlot and the drunkard, who, like the leper in the camp of Israel, have to be put away lest the contagion should spread.

And those who seek after right are obliged to turn away from them lest the evil should spread in the midst of the flock.

Now there are many who are lost to society whom Jesus Christ came to save and whom He will save. But a man may be lost to society and may be lost everlastingly. It is no proof that Christ will save him, because he is thus lostwhile at the same time it is no proof that He will not save him, for Christ came to save even men who are lost like this. Again, the man may go further and be lost to the family. We have known those who have become so vile that even after society has shut them out a parent has been obliged to shut then out, too. That must be a Hell of sin, indeed, which can make a father say to his son, My Son, you shall not want bread while I have any, but I must forbid you my house, for your brothers and sisters cannot endure your society. I feel you would destroy their souls if I should allow you to associate with them. Now, a man may be lost thus to his own family and yet Sovereign Grace will save him. But, mark, a man may be lost to his family and yet not be saved. Yes, that may be the increase of his condemnation, that he sinned against a mothers prayers and against a fathers exhortations.

Now I will tell you the people whom Christ will savethey are those who are lost to themselves. Just imagine a ship at sea passing through a stormthe ship leaks and the captain tells the passengers he fears they are lost. If they are far away from the shore and have sprung a leak, they pump with all their might as long as they have any strength remaining. They seek to keep down the devouring element. They still think that they are not quite lost while they have power to use the pumps. At last they see the ship cannot be saved. They give it up for lost and leap into the boats.

The boats are beating for many a day, full of men who have but little food to eat. They are lost, we say, lost out at sea. But they do not think so. They still cherish a hope that perhaps some stray ship may pass that way and pick them up. There is a ship in the horizon. They strain their eyes to look at her. They lift each other up. They wave a flag. They rend their garments to make something which shall attract attention. But she passes awayblack night comes and they are forgotten.

At length the very last mouthful of food has been consumed. Strength fails them and they lay down their oars in the boat and lay themselves down to die. You can imagine, then, how well they understand the awful meaning of the termlost. As long as they had any strength left they felt they were not lost. As long as they could see a sail they felt there was yet hope. While there was yet a moldy biscuit left, or a drop of water, they did not give up all for lost. Now the biscuit is gone and the water is gonenow strength has departed and the oar lies still.

They lie down to die by each others side, mere skeletonsthings that should have been dead days ago if they had died when all enjoyment of life had ceased. Now they know, I say, what it is to be lost and across the shoreless waters they seem to hear their death-knell pealing forth that awful word, Lost! Lost! Lost! Now, in a spiritual sense, these are the people Christ came to save. Sinner, you, too, are condemned. Our Father Adam steered the ship awry and she split upon a rock and she is filling even to her bulwarks now. And pump as philosophy may, it can never keep the waters of her depravity so low as to prevent the ship from sinking.

Seeing that human nature is of itself lost, it has taken to the boat. She is a fair boat, called the boat of Good Endeavor and in her you are striving to row with all your might to reach the shore. But your strength fails you. You say, Oh, I cannot keep Gods Law. The more I try to keep it, the more I find it to be impossible for me to do so. I climb. But the higher I climb, the higher is the top above me. When I was in the plains, I thought the mountain was but a moderate hill but now I seem to have ascended halfway up its stepsthere it is, higher than the cloudsand I cannot discern the summit.

However, you gather up your strength, you try again. You row once more and at last unable to do anything, you lay down your oars, feeling that if you are saved, it cannot be by your own works. Still you have a little hope left. There are a few small pieces of moldy biscuit remaining. You have heard that by attention to certain ceremonies you may be saved and you munch your dry biscuit. But at last that fails you and you find that neither Baptism, nor the Lords Supper, nor any other outward rites can make you cleanfor the leprosy lies deep within.

That done, you still look out. You are in hopes that there may be a sail coming and while floating upon that deep of despair, you think you detect in the distance some new dogma, some fresh doctrine that may comfort you. It passes, however, like the wild phantom shipit is gone and there you are left at last, with the burning sky of Gods vengeance above you with the deep waters of a bottomless Hell beneath you. Fire in your heart and emptiness in that ship which once was so full of hope, you lie down despairing and you cryLord save me, or I perish!

Is that your condition this morning, my Friend, or has that ever been your condition? If so, Christ came into the world to seek and to save you. And you He will save and no one else. He will save only those who can claim this for their titleLostwho have understood in their own souls what it is to be lost, as to all self-trust, all self-reliance and all self-hope.

I can look back to the time when I knew myself to be lost. I thought that God meant to destroy me. I imagined that because I felt myself to be lost, I was the special victim of Almighty vengeance. For I said unto the Lord, Have You set me as the target of all Your arrows? Am I a seal or a whale, that You have set a mark upon me? Have You sewed up my iniquities in a bag and sealed my transgressions with a seal? Will You never be gracious? Have You made me to be the center of all sorrow, the chosen one of Heaven to be cursed forever?

Ah, fool that I was! I little knew, then, that those who have the curse in themselves are the men whom God will blessthose that have the sentence of death in ourselvesthose that should not trust in ourselves, but in Him who died for us and rose again. Come, I will put the question once againcan you say that you are lost? Was there a time when you traveled with the caravan through this wild wilderness world? Have you left the caravan with your companions and are you left in the midst of a sea of

sanda hopeless, arid waste? And do you look around you and see no helper? And do you cast your eyes around and see no trust? Is the death bird wheeling in the sky, screaming with delight because he hopes soon to feed upon your flesh and bones? Is the water bottle dry and does the bread fail you?

Have you consumed the last of your dry dates and drunk the last of that brackish water from the bottle? And are you now without hope, without trust in yourselfready to lie down in despair? Listen! The Lord your God loves you! Jesus Christ has bought you with His blood! You are, you shall be His. He has been seeking you all this time and He has found you at last in the vast howling wilderness and now He will take you upon His shoulders and carry you to His house rejoicing! And the angels shall be glad over your salvation. Now, such people must and shall be saved and this is the description of those whom Jesus Christ came to save. Whom He came to save He will save. You, you lost oneslost to all hope and self confidence, shall be saved. Though death and Hell should stand in the way, Christ will perform His vow and accomplish His design.

I shall be very brief in concluding my discourse. But we have now to notice THE OBJECTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRISTHe came to seek and to save that which was lost. I am so glad that these two words are both there, for if they were not, what hope would there be for any of us? The Arminian says Christ came to save those that seek Him. Beloved, there is a sense in which that is true. But it is a lie. Christ did come to save those that seek Him but no one ever sought the Lord Jesus Christ unless the Lord Jesus first sought him. Christ does not leave it to ourselves to seek Him, or else it would be left indeed, for so vile is human nature that although Heaven is offered and though Hell thunders in our ears, yet there never was and there never will be any man unconstrained by Sovereign Grace, who will run in the way of salvation and so escape from Hell and flee to Heaven.

It is all in vain for me to preach to you and all in vain for the most earnest exhortations to be addressed to any of you unless the Holy Spirit shall be pleased to back them up. For man is so infatuatedhis disease is one which causes such a madness of the brainthat he refuses the remedy and puts away from him the healing draught which alone can give him life from the dead. You will not come unto Me that you might have life. Let man aloneand with the Cross of Christ before him and all Hell behind himhe will shut his eyes and prefer to be damned rather than enter into eternal life by the blood of Christ the Lord.

Hence Christ came first to seek men, and then to save them. Ah, what a task that is of seeking men! There are some of you today on the tops of the mountains of pride and others of you in the deep glens of despair. Methinks I see the Savior coming forth to seek you. He finds you today in the green pastures of the sanctuary. He comes near to you and by these hands of mine He seeks to lay hold of youbut no sooner do you discern His approachthan you run far away into the wild desert of sin. Perhaps this evening you will be spending the remnant of the Sabbath in profaning Gods Day. One of you at least I know who will be in the public house as soon as the evening sermon is over and most probably will go home very late.

If Christ intends to save you, He will go to you there. And while you are in that wild waste of sin, He will send some Providence after you and save you there. Away you fly, then, to the marshes of reformation and you say, The Shepherd cannot overtake me. I shall be beyond His reach now, I have left off my drunkenness, I have given up my cursing. But He will come to you there and wade for you ankle deep in your own selfrighteousness. And then you will run away again and jump into the deep pit of despair and there you will say to yourself, He can never find me here.

But I see Him coming with that crook of HisHe enters the pit, takes you by the feet and casts you round His neck and carries you home rejoicing, saying, I have found him at last! Wherever he wandered, I sought him and now I have found him. It is strange what strange places Christ finds some of His people! I knew one of Christs sheep who was found out by his Master while committing robbery. I knew another who was found out by Christ while he was spiting his old mother by reading the Sunday newspaper and making fun of her.

Many have been found by Jesus Christ even in the midst of sin and vanity. I knew a preacher of the Gospel who was converted in a theater. He was listening to a play, an old-fashioned piece, that ended with a sailors drinking a glass of gin before he was hung and he said, Heres to the prosperity to the British Nation and the salvation of my immortal soul. Down went the curtain. And down went my friend, too, for he ran home with all his might. Those words, The salvation of my immortal soul, had struck him to the quick. And he sought the Lord Jesus in his chamber. Many a day he sought Him and at last Jesus found him to his joy and confidence.

But for the most part Christ finds His people in His own house. But He finds them often in the worst of tempers, in the most hardened conditions. And He softens their hearts, awakens their consciences, subdues their pride and takes them to Himself. But never would they come to Him unless He came to them. Sheep go astray, but they do not come back again of themselves. Ask the shepherd whether his sheep come back and he will tell you, No, Sir. They will wander, but they never return. When you find a sheep that ever came back of himself, then you may hope to find a sinner that will come to Christ of himself. No. It must be Sovereign Grace that must seek the sinner and bring him home.

And when Christ seeks him He SAVES him. Having caught him at last, like the ram of old, in the thorns of conviction, He does not take a knife and slay him as the sinner expectsbut He takes him by the hand of mercy and begins to comfort and to save. Oh, you lost Sinners, the Christ who seeks you today in the ministry and who has sought you many a day by His Providence will save you! He will first find you when you are emptied of self and then He will save you. When you are stripped He will bring forth the best robe and put it on you.

When you are dying He will breathe life into your nostrils. When you feel yourselves condemned He will come and blot out your iniquities like a cloud and your transgressions like a thick cloud. Fear not, you hopeless and helpless souls, Christ seeks you today and seeking, He will save yousave you here, save you living, save you dying, save you in time, save you in eternity and give you, even you, the lost ones, a portion among them that are sanctified. May the Lord now bless these words to your consolation!

III. I shall not say more, as I intended to have done, lest I should weary you. Let me only remind you that the time is coming when that word lost will have a more frightful meaning to you than it has today. In a few more months, some of you, my Hearers, will hear the great bell of eternity tolling forth that awful wordlost, lost, lost! The great sepulchers of Hell will toll out your doomlost, lost, lost! And through the shades of eternal misery this shall forever assail your ear, that you are lost forever.

But if that bell is ringing in your ear todaythat you are lostoh, be of good cheer, it is a good thing to be so lostit is a happy thing to be lost to self and lost to pride and lost to carnal hope! Christ will save you! Believe that. Look to Him as He hangs upon His Cross. One look shall give you comfort. Turn your weeping eyes to Him as He bleeds there in misery. He can, He will, save you. Believe on Him, for He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not must be damned. But whosoever among the lost ones will now cast himself on Christ Jesus, he shall find everlasting life through His death and righteousness. May the Lord now gather in His lost sheep, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

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THE MISSION OF THE SON OF MAN   
(Particular Redemption) NO. 204

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 11, 1858,   
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.   
For the Son of Man is cometo seek and tosave that which was lost. Luke 19:10.

How fond our Master was of the sweet title, the Son of Man! If He had chosen, He might always have spoken of Himself as the Son of God, the Everlasting Father, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Prince of Peace. He has a thousand gorgeous titles, resplendent as the throne of Heaven, but He cares not to use them. To express His humility and let us see the lowliness of Him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light, He calls not Himself the Son of God, but He speaks of Himself evermore as the Son of Man who came down from Heaven.

Let us learn a lesson of humility from our Savior. Let us never court great titles, nor proud degrees. What are they, after all, but beggarly distinctions whereby one worm is known from another? He that has the most of them is a worm still and is in nature no greater than his fellows. If Jesus called Himself the Son of Man when He had far greater names, let us learn to humble ourselves unto men of low estate, knowing that he that humbles himself shall in due time be exalted.

Methinks, however, there is a sweeter thought than this in that name, Son of Man. It seems to me that Christ loved manhood so much that He always desired to honor it. And since it is a high honor and, indeed, the greatest dignity of manhood that Jesus Christ was the Son of Man, He desires to display this name, that He may, as it were, put rich stars upon the breast of manhood and put a crown upon its head. Son of Manwhenever He said that word He seemed to put a halo round the head of Adams children.

Yet there is perhaps a more lovely thought still. Jesus Christ called Himself the Son of Man because He loved to be a man. It was a great stoop for Him to come from Heaven and to be Incarnate. It was a mighty stoop of condescension when He left the harps of angels and the songs of cherubim to mingle with the vulgar herd of His own creatures. But condescension though it were, He loved it. You will remember that when He became incarnate He did not become so in the dark. When He brings forth the only begotten into the world He said, Let all the angels of God worship Him.

It was told in Heaven. It was not done as a dark secret which Jesus Christ would do in the night that none might know it. But all the angels of God were brought to witness the advent of a Savior a span long, sleeping upon a Virgins breast and lying in a manger. And ever afterwards and even now, He never blushed to confess that He was Mannever looked back upon His incarnation with the slightest regret. He always regarded it with a joyous recollection, thinking Himself thrice happy that He had ever become the Son of Man. All hail blessed Jesus! We know how much You love our race. We can well understand the greatness of Your mercy towards Your chosen ones, inasmuch as You are evermore using the sweet name which acknowledges that they are bone of Your bone and flesh of Your flesh and You are one of them, a Brother and a near kinsman!

Our text announces as a declaration of our Savior, that He, the Son of Man, is come to seek and to save that which was lost. In addressing you this morning I shall simply divide my discourse thusFirst, I shall lay it down as a self-evident Truth, that whatever was the intention of Christ in His coming into the world that intention most certainly shall never be frustrated. We shall then in the second place, look into the intention of Christ, as announced in the text, viz., to seek and to save that which was lost. Then, in concluding, we shall derive a word of comfort and perhaps one of warning, from the intention of our Savior in coming into the world to seek and to save that which was lost.

I. You are aware that there has been a very great discussion among all Christians about the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is one class of men who believe in what is called general redemption, affirming it to be an undoubted truth that Jesus Christ has shed His blood for every man and that the intention of Christ in His death was the salvation of men considered as a whole. They have, however, to overlook the fact that in this case Christs intention would be frustrated in a measure.

There are others of us who hold what is called the doctrine of Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement We conceive that the blood of Christ was of an infinite value, but that the intention of the death of Christ never was the salvation of all men. For if Christ had designed the salvation of all men, we hold that all men would have been saved. We believe that the intention of Christs death is just equal to its effects, and therefore I start this morning by announcing what I regard to be a self-evident Truththat whatever was the intention of Jesus Christ in coming into the worldthat intention most certainly shall be fulfilled.

But I shall make use of a few arguments to strengthen this doctrine, although I believe that on the very first announcement it commends itself to every thinking mind.   
In the first place, it seems to be inconsistent with the very idea of God that He should ever intend anything which should not be accomplished. When I look at man I see him to be a creature so distracted with folly and so devoid of power that I do not wonder that he often begins to build and is not able to finish. I do not marvel that full often he stops short because he has not counted the cost. I wonder not, when I think how much there is that is above mans control that he should sometimes propose but that God should dispose far differently from his proposition.   
I see man to be the insect of a day, a mere speck upon the bay leaf of existence. And when I see him as a mere drop in the great sea of creation, I do not wonder that when he is ambitious he sometimes fashions in himself great designs which he is unable to accomplish because the wheels of Providence and destiny will often run quite contrary to all the frolic of his will. But when I think of God whose name is, I AM that I AM, the self-existent One, in whom we live and move and have our being, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the Almighty God. When I think of Him as filling immensity, having all power and strength, knowing all things, having a fullness of wisdomI cannot associate with such an idea of God the supposition of His ever failing in any of His intentions.   
It would seem to me that a God who could intend a thing and fail in His intention would not be Godbut be a thing like ourselvesperhaps superior in strength, but certainly not entitled to worship. I cannot think of God as a true and real God like Jehovah, except as a Being who wills and it is accomplished. Who speaks and it is done. Who commands and it stands fast foreversettled in Heaven. I cannot therefore imagine, since Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that in His atonement and redemption His real intention and desire can in any way be frustrated. If I were a Socinian and believed Jesus Christ to be a mere man, I could, of course, imagine that the result of His redemption would be uncertain. But believing that Jesus Christ was very God of very God, equal and co-eternal with the Father, I dare not, lest I should be guilty of presumption and blasphemy, associate with that name of Jehovah Jesus any suspicion that the design of His death shall remain unaccomplished.   
But again, we have before us the fact, that up to now, all the works of God have accomplished their purpose. Whenever God has uttered by the lips of His servants a prophecy, it has surely come to pass. The instruments of accomplishing that purpose have often been the most factious and rebellious of men. They had no intention whatever of serving God. They have run contrary to His Laws. But you will observe that when they have dashed wildly along, His bit has been still in their mouth and His bridle in their jaws.   
A great monarch has acted like leviathan in the seahe has moved himself wherever he pleased. He has seemed mighty among the sons of menall the rest of mankind were as minnows, while he was a huge leviathan. But we discover that God has been overruling his thoughts, that He has been in his council chamber, that the wildest speculations of his ambition have, after all, been but the fulfilling of Jehovahs stern decrees. Look abroad through all the nations of the earth and tell meis there one prophecy of God that has failed? May He not still say, Not one of them has lost her mate?   
Every Word of God has certainly been accomplished. The kings of the earth stood up and took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break His bands asunder and cast His cords from us. But He that sits in the heavens did laugh at them. The Lord did have them in derision. Still He worked His own sovereign will. Let them do as they pleased, God was over them all, reigning and ruling evermore. If, then, Gods purpose in Providence certainly never has been frustrated, am I to imagine that Gods purpose in the glorious sacrifice of Jesus Christ shall be null and void?

If there are any of you who have arrived at such a contortion of intellect as to conceive that a less work being accomplished, a greater one shall fail, I must leave you to yourselves. With you I could not argueI should think you incapable of an argument. Surely, if God the Master, the Judge, the King, has in all things done according to His own pleasure in this lower world, in the mere creation and preservation of men, it is not to be dreamed of for a moment, that when He stoops Himself from the highest Heaven, to give His own hearts blood for our redemption, He shall in that be foiled! No, though earth and Hell are against Him, every purpose of Jesus on the Cross shall be consummated and as the price was finished, so shall the purchase be. As the means were fully provided, so shall the end be accomplished to its utmost jot and tittle.   
But again, I invite you to stand at the foot of the Cross and take a view of Jesus Christ. And then I will put it to you whether you can imagine that Jesus Christ could in any measure have died in vain. Come, Believer, place yourself in the garden of Gethsemane, hide yourself among those dark olives and listen to yonder Man who is in agony. Do you hear those groans? They are the groans of an incarnate God. Do you hear those sighs? They are the sighs of the Son of Man, God over all, blessed forever. Do you hear those strong cries and do you see those tears? They are the crying and the tears of Him who is equal with His Father, but who condescended to be a Man.   
Rise, for He has risen, Judas has betrayed Him and taken Him away. Look on that ground. Do you see those clots of gore? It is the bloody sweat of the Man Christ Jesus. I beseech you, answer this question. Standing in the garden of Gethsemane, with those blood clots staining the white frost of that cold midnight, can you believe that one of those clots of blood shall fall to the ground and not effect its purpose? I challenge you, O Christian, whatever your doctrinal opinions, to say to me, Yes, to such a question as that!   
Can you imagine that a sweat of blood from the veins of incarnate Deity shall ever fall to the ground and fail? Why, Beloved, the Word of God which comes forth out of His mouth shall not return unto Him void, but it shall accomplish that which He pleases. How much more shall the Great WORD of God, which came forth from the loin of Deity, accomplish the purpose whereunto God has sent Him, and prosper in the thing for which it pleased God to ordain Him!?   
But now come with me to the hall of judgment. See there your Master placed in mock state in the midst of a ribald band of soldiers. Do you see how they spit on those blessed cheeks, how they pluck His hair, how they buffet Him? Do you see the crown of thorns with its ruby drops of gore? Hark! Can you hear the cry of the multitude, as they say, Crucify Him, crucify Him? And will you now stand there and look at this Man whom Pilate has just brought forth, still bleeding from the lash of the scourge, covered with shame and spit and mockery and as this Ecce Homo is presented to you, will you believe that this, the incarnate Son of God, shall be made such a spectacle to men, to angels and to devilsand yet fail of His design?   
Can you imagine that one lash of that whip shall have a fruitless aim? Shall Jesus Christ suffer this shame and spitting and yet endure what was far worsea disappointment in the fulfillment of His intentions? No, God forbid! No! By Gethsemane and Gabbatha, we are pledged to the strong belief that what Christ designed by His death must certainly be accomplished.   
Then again, see him hanging on His Cross. The nails have pierced His hands and feet and there in the broiling sun He hangsHe hangs to die. The mockery has not ceased. Still they put out the tongue and wag the head at Him. Still they taunt Him with, If you are the Son of God come down from the Cross. And now His bodily pains increase, while His souls anguish is terrible even unto death. Christian, can you believe that the blood of Christ was shed in vain? Can you look at one of those precious drops as it trickles from His head or His hands or His feet and can you imagine that it shall fall to the ground and perish there? Trust the waters may fail from the sea, the sun may grow dim with age, but I never can imagine that the value, the merit, the power of the blood of Jesus ever shall die out, or that its purpose shall be unaccomplished. It seems to me as clear as noonday, that the design of the Saviors death must certainly be fulfilledbe it what it may.   
I might use a hundred other arguments. I might show that every attribute of Christ declares that His purpose must be accomplished. He certainly has love enough to accomplish His design of saving the lost, for He has a love that is bottomless and fathomless, even as the abyss itself. He certainly has no objection to the accomplishment of His own design, for, As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live. And certainly the Lord cannot fail for want of power, for where there is omnipotence there can be no deficiency of strength.   
Nor again can the design be unaccomplished because it was unwise, for Gods designs cannot be unwise, simply because they are of Godthat is to saythey are of infinite wisdom. I cannot see anything in the Character of Christ, nor anything the wide world over, that can for one moment make me imagine that Christ should die and yet it should be said afterwards, This Man died for a purpose which He never lived to see accomplishedthe object of His death was only partially fulfilled. He saw of the travail of His soul, but He was not satisfied, for He did not redeem all whom He intended to redeem.   
Now, some persons love the doctrine of universal atonement because they say it so beautiful. It is a lovely idea that Christ should have died for all men. It commends itself, they say, to the instincts of humanity. There is something in it full of joy and beauty. I admit there is. But beauty may be often associated with falsehood. There is much which I might well admire in the theory of universal redemption but let me just tell you what the supposition necessarily involves. If Christ on His Cross intended to save every man, then He intended to save those who were damned before He died. If the doctrine is true, that He died for all men, He died for some that were in Hell before He came into this world, for doubtless there were myriads there that had been cast away.   
Once again, if it were Christs intention to save all men, how deplorably has He been disappointed! We have His own evidence that there is a lake that burns with fire and brimstone and into that pit must be cast some of the very persons who, according to that theory, were bought with His blood. That seems to me a thousand times more frightful than any of those horrors which are said to be associated with the Calvinistic and Christian doctrine of Particular Redemption.   
To think that my Savior died for men in Hell seems a supposition too horrible for me to imaginethat He was the Substitute for the sons of men and that God having first punished the Substitute punished men again, seems to me to be in conflict with any idea of justice. That Christ should offer an atonement and satisfaction for the sins of men and that afterwards those very men should be punished for the sins which Christ had already atoned for, seems to me, to be the most marvelous monstrosity that ever could have been imputed to Saturn, to Janus, yes, to the god of the Thugs, or the most diabolical heathen demons. God forbid that we should ever think thus of Jehovah, the Just and Wise. If Christ has suffered in mans stead, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and save us from all unrighteousness.   
II. I have thus stated the first thought that the intention of Christs death cannot be frustrated. And now methinks everyone will anxiously listen and every ear will be attentive and the question will arise from every heart, WHAT THEN, WAS THE INTENTION OF THE SAVIORS DEATH? AND IS IT POSSIBLE THAT I CAN HAVE A PORTION IN IT? For whom, then, did the Savior dieand is there the slightest probability that I have some lot or portion in that great atonement which He has offered? Beloved, my text is the answer to the question The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Now, our text tells us two thingsfirst, the subjects of the Saviors atonement, the lost. And, secondly, the purpose of itHe came to seek and save.   
I must now endeavor to pick out the objects of the Saviors atonement. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Some of you may turn your heads away at once and conclude that up to now you have given no evidence that you have any portion in the death of Christ. You are very good sort of people. You never did much that was wrongperhaps a little now and then. But nothing particular ever troubles your conscience. You have a notion that you shall certainly enter into the kingdom of Heaven, for you are no worse than your neighbors and if you are not saved, God help other people! If you do not go to Heaven, who will?   
You are trusting in your own good works and believing you are righteous. Now let us decide your case at once. Since you are ashamed to put yourselves among those who are lost, I have no Christ to preach to you till you are ready to come and confess that you are lost. For Christ himself tells us that He came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And inasmuch as you belong to the righteous and trust in yourselves that you are good and excellent, you may turn upon your heel and go. In the blood of Christ there is no portion for men who live and die trusting in their own self-righteousness.   
But I may dismiss another part of you. Some of you are saying, Well, Sir, I know I am guilty, but still I am persuaded that by attention to the Law of God, I shall certainly be able to take away the demerit of my guilt. I intend henceforward to reform and I believe that by a consistent course of attention to religious ordinances and by carefully regarding that which is right and wrong between God and man, and man and man, I shall, without doubt, make an atonement for the sins of the past. Ah, my Friend, up to now you give me no hope that you have any portion in the death of Christ. Christ came not to die for men who can

save themselves without Him. If you think you can save yourself remember the door of mercy is shut in your face.   
Christ came to bring robes from Heaven, but not for you who can spin for yourselves. He came to bring bread for the hungry, but He will give none of it to you who can sow and reap and make bread for yourselves. Christ helps the helpless, but they who can help themselves and have sufficient of their own strength and merit to carry them to Heaven may fight their way there alone, if they canthey shall have no help from Him. Whom, then, did Christ die to save? It is said, He came to save that which was lost.   
Now, you must bear with me while I run over the different ways in which a man may be lost. And then I will conclude by noticing the term as it is used in the proper sense. We may affirm that Christ died for the lost. We know that all men are lost in Adamas soon as we are born into this world, we are lost. When the tiny boat of the infant is launched upon the river of life it is lost. Unless Sovereign Grace shall stretch forth its hand and save it in infancy and carry it to Heaven or save it afterwards, when it shall have grown upthat infant is lost. Behold, says David, I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. In sin did my mother conceive me. In Adam all die. The Fall of Adam was the fall of the human race. Then you and I and all of us fell down.   
Again, we are all lost by practice. No sooner does the child become capable of knowing right and wrong than you discover that he chooses the evil and abhors the good. Early passions soon break out like weeds immediately after the shower of rainspeedily the hidden depravity of the heart makes itself manifest and we grow up to sin and so we become lost by practice. But mark, a man may be lost in Adam and lost by practice and yet be saved by Christ. Christ is able to save youthough you are twice lostHis salvation is able to redeem you from death.   
Then there are some who go further still. The deadly tree of sin grows taller and taller and some become lost to the Church. After having been trained up religiously in our midst, they turn asidethey give up all outward regard to the worship of God. The ministry of the Gospel is neglected, the house of prayer is forsaken and the Church tolls its bell and says of such an one, He is lost to the Church. Some go further still. They are lost to society. I have seen many who are dead while they live. We have in the midst of us the harlot and the drunkard, who, like the leper in the camp of Israel, have to be put away lest the contagion should spread. And those who seek after right are obliged to turn away from them lest the evil should spread in the midst of the flock.   
Now there are many who are lost to society whom Jesus Christ came to save and whom He will save. But a man may be lost to society and may be lost everlastingly. It is no proof that Christ will save him, because he is thus lostwhile at the same time it is no proof that He will not save him, for Christ came to save even men who are lost like this. Again, the man may go further and be lost to the family. We have known those who have become so vile that even after society has shut them out a parent has been obliged to shut then out, too. That must be a Hell of sin, indeed, which can make a father say to his son, My Son, you shall not want bread while I have any, but I must forbid you my house, for your brothers and sisters cannot endure your society. I feel you would destroy their souls if I should allow you to associate with them. Now, a man may be lost thus to his own family and yet Sovereign Grace will save him. But, mark, a man may be lost to his family and yet not be saved. Yes, that may be the increase of his condemnation, that he sinned against a mothers prayers and against a fathers exhortations.   
Now I will tell you the people whom Christ will savethey are those who are lost to themselves. Just imagine a ship at sea passing through a stormthe ship leaks and the captain tells the passengers he fears they are lost. If they are far away from the shore and have sprung a leak, they pump with all their might as long as they have any strength remaining. They seek to keep down the devouring element. They still think that they are not quite lost while they have power to use the pumps. At last they see the ship cannot be saved. They give it up for lost and leap into the boats.   
The boats are beating for many a day, full of men who have but little food to eat. They are lost, we say, lost out at sea. But they do not think so. They still cherish a hope that perhaps some stray ship may pass that way and pick them up. There is a ship in the horizon. They strain their eyes to look at her. They lift each other up. They wave a flag. They rend their garments to make something which shall attract attention. But she passes awayblack night comes and they are forgotten.   
At length the very last mouthful of food has been consumed. Strength fails them and they lay down their oars in the boat and lay themselves down to die. You can imagine, then, how well they understand the awful meaning of the termlost. As long as they had any strength left they felt they were not lost. As long as they could see a sail they felt there was yet hope. While there was yet a moldy biscuit left, or a drop of water, they did not give up all for lost. Now the biscuit is gone and the water is gonenow strength has departed and the oar lies still.   
They lie down to die by each others side, mere skeletonsthings that should have been dead days ago if they had died when all enjoyment of life had ceased. Now they know, I say, what it is to be lost and across the shoreless waters they seem to hear their death-knell pealing forth that awful word, Lost! Lost! Lost! Now, in a spiritual sense, these are the people Christ came to save. Sinner, you, too, are condemned. Our Father Adam steered the ship awry and she split upon a rock and she is filling even to her bulwarks now. And pump as philosophy may, it can never keep the waters of her depravity so low as to prevent the ship from sinking.   
Seeing that human nature is of itself lost, it has taken to the boat. She is a fair boat, called the boat of Good Endeavor and in her you are striving to row with all your might to reach the shore. But your strength fails you. You say, Oh, I cannot keep Gods Law. The more I try to keep it, the more I find it to be impossible for me to do so. I climb. But the higher I climb, the higher is the top above me. When I was in the plains, I thought the mountain was but a moderate hill but now I seem to have ascended half-way up its stepsthere it is, higher than the clouds and I cannot discern the summit.   
However, you gather up your strength, you try again. You row once more and at last unable to do anything, you lay down your oars, feeling that if you are saved, it cannot be by your own works. Still you have a little hope left. There are a few small pieces of moldy biscuit remaining. You have heard that by attention to certain ceremonies you may be saved and you munch your dry biscuit. But at last that fails you and you find that neither Baptism, nor the Lords Supper, nor any other outward rites can make you cleanfor the leprosy lies deep within.   
That done, you still look out. You are in hopes that there may be a sail coming and while floating upon that deep of despair, you think you detect in the distance some new dogma, some fresh doctrine that may comfort you. It passes, however, like the wild phantom shipit is gone and there you are left at last, with the burning sky of Gods vengeance above youwith the deep waters of a bottomless Hell beneath you. Fire in your heart and emptiness in that ship which once was so full of hope, you lie down despairing and you cryLord save me, or I perish!   
Is that your condition this morning, my Friend, or has that ever been your condition? If so, Christ came into the world to seek and to save you. And you He will save and no one else. He will save only those who can claim this for their titleLostwho have understood in their own souls what it is to be lost, as to all self-trust, all self-reliance and all self-hope.   
I can look back to the time when I knew myself to be lost. I thought that God meant to destroy me. I imagined that because I felt myself to be lost, I was the special victim of Almighty vengeance. For I said unto the Lord, Have You set me as the target of all Your arrows? Am I a seal or a whale, that You have set a mark upon me? Have You sewed up my iniquities in a bag and sealed my transgressions with a seal? Will You never be gracious? Have You made me to be the center of all sorrow, the chosen one of Heaven to be cursed forever?   
Ah, fool that I was! I little knew, then, that those who have the curse in themselves are the men whom God will blessthose that have the sentence of death in ourselvesthose that should not trust in ourselves, but in Him who died for us and rose again. Come, I will put the question once againcan you say that you are lost? Was there a time when you traveled with the caravan through this wild wilderness world? Have you left the caravan with your companions and are you left in the midst of a sea of sanda hopeless, arid waste? And do you look around you and see no helper? And do you cast your eyes around and see no trust? Is the death bird wheeling in the sky, screaming with delight because he hopes soon to feed upon your flesh and bones? Is the water bottle dry and does the bread fail you?   
Have you consumed the last of your dry dates and drunk the last of that brackish water from the bottle? And are you now without hope, without trust in yourselfready to lie down in despair? Listen! The Lord your God loves you! Jesus Christ has bought you with His blood! You are, you shall be His. He has been seeking you all this time and He has found you at last in the vast howling wilderness and now He will take you upon His shoulders and carry you to His house rejoicing! And the angels shall be glad over your salvation. Now, such people must and shall be saved and this is the description of those whom Jesus Christ came to save. Whom He came to save He will save. You, you lost oneslost to all hope and self confidence, shall be saved. Though death and Hell should stand in the way, Christ will perform His vow and accomplish His design.

I shall be very brief in concluding my discourse. But we have now to notice THE OBJECTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRISTHe came to seek and to save that which was lost. I am so glad that these two words are both there, for if they were not, what hope would there be for any of us? The Arminian says Christ came to save those that seek Him. Beloved, there is a sense in which that is true. But it is a lie. Christ did come to save those that seek Him but no one ever sought the Lord Jesus Christ unless the Lord Jesus first sought him. Christ does not leave it to ourselves to seek Him, or else it would be left indeed, for so vile is human nature that although Heaven is offered and though Hell thunders in our ears, yet there never was and there never will be any man unconstrained by Sovereign Grace, who will run in the way of salvation and so escape from Hell and flee to Heaven.   
It is all in vain for me to preach to you and all in vain for the most earnest exhortations to be addressed to any of you unless the Holy Spirit shall be pleased to back them up. For man is so infatuatedhis disease is one which causes such a madness of the brainthat he refuses the remedy and puts away from him the healing draught which alone can give him life from the dead. You will not come unto Me that you might have life. Let man aloneand with the Cross of Christ before him and all Hell behind himhe will shut his eyes and prefer to be damned rather than enter into eternal life by the blood of Christ the Lord.   
Hence Christ came first to seek men, and then to save them. Ah, what a task that is of seeking men! There are some of you today on the tops of the mountains of pride and others of you in the deep glens of despair. Methinks I see the Savior coming forth to seek you. He finds you today in the green pastures of the sanctuary. He comes near to you and by these hands of mine He seeks to lay hold of youbut no sooner do you discern His approachthan you run far away into the wild desert of sin. Perhaps this evening you will be spending the remnant of the Sabbath in profaning Gods Day. One of you at least I know who will be in the public house as soon as the evening sermon is over and most probably will go home very late.   
If Christ intends to save you, He will go to you there. And while you are in that wild waste of sin, He will send some Providence after you and save you there. Away you fly, then, to the marshes of reformation and you say, The Shepherd cannot overtake me. I shall be beyond His reach now, I have left off my drunkenness, I have given up my cursing. But He will come to you there and wade for you ankle deep in your own self-righteousness. And then you will run away again and jump into the deep pit of despair and there you will say to yourself, He can never find me here.   
But I see Him coming with that crook of HisHe enters the pit, takes you by the feet and casts you round His neck and carries you home rejoicing, saying, I have found him at last! Wherever he wandered, I sought him and now I have found him. It is strange what strange places Christ finds some of His people! I knew one of Christs sheep who was found out by his Master while committing robbery. I knew another who was found out by Christ while he was spiting his old mother by reading the Sunday newspaper and making fun of her.   
Many have been found by Jesus Christ even in the midst of sin and vanity. I knew a preacher of the Gospel who was converted in a theater. He was listening to a play, an old-fashioned piece, that ended with a sailors drinking a glass of gin before he was hung and he said, Heres to the prosperity to the British Nation and the salvation of my immortal soul. Down went the curtain. And down went my friend, too, for he ran home with all his might. Those words, The salvation of my immortal soul, had struck him to the quick. And he sought the Lord Jesus in his chamber. Many a day he sought Him and at last Jesus found him to his joy and confidence.   
But for the most part Christ finds His people in His own house. But He finds them often in the worst of tempers, in the most hardened conditions. And He softens their hearts, awakens their consciences, subdues their pride and takes them to Himself. But never would they come to Him unless He came to them. Sheep go astray, but they do not come back again of themselves. Ask the shepherd whether his sheep come back and he will tell you, No, Sir. They will wander, but they never return. When you find a sheep that ever came back of himself, then you may hope to find a sinner that will come to Christ of himself. No. It must be Sovereign Grace that must seek the sinner and bring him home.   
And when Christ seeks him He SAVES him. Having caught him at last, like the ram of old, in the thorns of conviction, He does not take a knife and slay him as the sinner expectsbut He takes him by the hand of mercy and begins to comfort and to save. Oh, you lost Sinners, the Christ who seeks you today in the ministry and who has sought you many a day by His Providence will save you! He will first find you when you are emptied of self and then He will save you. When you are stripped He will bring forth the best robe and put it on you.   
When you are dying He will breathe life into your nostrils. When you feel yourselves condemned He will come and blot out your iniquities like a cloud and your transgressions like a thick cloud. Fear not, you hopeless and helpless souls, Christ seeks you today and seeking, He will save yousave you here, save you living, save you dying, save you in time, save you in eternity and give you, even you, the lost ones, a portion among them that are sanctified. May the Lord now bless these words to your consolation!  
III. I shall not say more, as I intended to have done, lest I should weary you. Let me only remind you that the time is coming when that word lost will have a more frightful meaning to you than it has today. In a few more months, some of you, my Hearers, will hear the great bell of eternity tolling forth that awful wordlost, lost, lost! The great sepulchers of Hell will toll out your doomlost, lost, lost! And through the shades of eternal misery this shall forever assail your ear, that you are lost forever.   
But if that bell is ringing in your ear todaythat you are lostoh, be of good cheer, it is a good thing to be so lostit is a happy thing to be lost to self and lost to pride and lost to carnal hope! Christ will save you! Believe that. Look to Him as He hangs upon His Cross. One look shall give you comfort. Turn your weeping eyes to Him as He bleeds there in misery. He can, He will, save you. Believe on Him, for He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not must be damned. But whosoever among the lost ones will now cast himself on Christ Jesus, he shall find everlasting life through His death and righteousness. May the Lord now gather in His lost sheep, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

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SAVING THE LOST   
NO. 2756

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON, LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 8, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 17, 1879.

**The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10.**

OUR Lords mission upon earth was a very gracious one. It had a narrow side to it, for He came only as a Ministernot as a Savior, mark you, but as Ministerto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He was, as the Apostle Paul reminds us, a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. And He did not traverse any other country but Palestine, in order to preach the Gospel to the people, but He kept Himself to the seed of Abraham.

Yet there was abundant room for one personal ministry within that realm alone. If a Christian worker were to say that he would confine his labors to London, he certainly need not think that he would have a restricted range! And our Saviors personal preaching in Palestine gave Him more work than any one man could accomplish. But, even in that restricted sense, it is remarkable that He should have said to the woman of Canaan, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The lost sheep were the peculiar desire of His heartnot so much Israel, as the lost sheep of the house of Israel. His eye was especially fixed upon them, His Grace sought out the objects most needing it. His mercy hungered after human misery in order that He might relieve it so that there were always uppermost in His mind, thoughts of pity and love towards the sons of men.

At this present moment, under the Gospel dispensation, there is no division between Israel and the Gentile. I do not care whether I am an Israelite or not, after the flesh, because in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile. That is all abolished and all the fuss that some people make about whether we are descended from the Jews is nonsense and nothing better! If it is so, it does not matter in the least. For now there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor freebut Christ is all and in all. The middle wall of partition has been taken down once and for all and, now, all over the world, this Truth of God stands in reference not to this nation, or to that, alone, but to the whole human race, The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Still do His eyes, with eagle keenness, spy out the lost. Still do those eyes, with dove-like tenderness, weep for the lost! Still does the eternal Savior live that He may seek and save that which was lost!

If you were never lost, you have no part or lot in His work of salvation. But if you are lost, and know it, this is the very link which unites you to the Savior! He has come to seek and to save just such as you are and I hope, in the observations I am about to make, that I shall be able to show that He came to save you!

I. I shall speak concerning OUR LORDS MISSION. He has come to seek and to save that which was lost.   
Notice, first, what a gracious mission it was! It was a mission of pure mercy and indescribable love. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not come into the world to seek His own honor, but to seek and to save the lost. Not to get anything for Himself, but to give everything to those who are lost. His mission is one of undeserved goodness, on His part, towards those who have treated Him evilly and who deserve very different treatment at His hands. There was no law except His own love to compel Christ to come to save sinners. They had no claim upon Him. When He resolved to come, it was an act of matchless Grace. If He had not chosen to come, He would still have been the ever-blessed Son of the Highest, enshrined in everlasting Glory though everyone of us had perished! His coming was Infinite goodness, returning good for evil, coming down to our lost estate and determining, by superabundant affection, to save us from it! Our Savior is embodied Grace, Incarnate Love and His mission is Grace itself. Let us never forget that He came to save the lostnot to save the good and the excellent.   
Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, Christs eyes look in the opposite direction to ours. We usually look for some goodness on the part of men before we help them, but He looks to their sin, degradation and need. He is kind to the unthankful and the evil. He justifies those who are not, in themselves, justwhile we were dead in trespasses and sins, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Grace, pure Grace, abounds in Him and is blessedly manifested in His mission of saving the lost.   
Further, while that mission is a very gracious one, I cal1 your attention to the fact that it is also a great one. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost and there are plenty of them. It is no small charge that Christ has taken up when He speaks of saving the lost. What a mass of our fellow countrymen are lost! I mean, in the common use of the term, the lost classes that are morally gone astray and are, by universal consent, put down among the lost. Look at whole nations of mankind that are sunk up to their eyelids in infamous transgression, lost to every sense of shame and decency. Christ, however, has come to save just such as they are and, to tell the truth, the difference between us and them, by nature, is not more than skin deep! We are a little better washed on the outside than they are, but the inside of the cup and platter of fallen humanity is pretty much alike in all men. We may have been better taught. We may have been more restrained than they have been, but a viper is still a viper wherever he may live and man is, in every case, a lost man, a depraved and sinful creature. To my mind, it seems a wondrous charge for Christ to undertaketo save the lost without any qualification added to the wordjust the lost.   
What a mission Christianity had when it first came, for instance, into Rome! When Christianity first came there it was inconceivably vile. Its emperors were madmen! I think I cannot truthfully say less of such monsters as Nero, Tiberius and Caligula, whose power seemed all to be bent to supply themselves with the means for the indulgence of the most abandoned forms of vice. The city of Rome was full of statues, the larger part of which, thank God, have been utterly destroyedand I often wish the rest had been, for many of them are polluting and depraving even to look upon. The city was full of idols as well as of art and the principal images were not the more respectable ones, like Jupiter and Mercury, but Venus and Bacchus and other abominations from the filthy crowd of Olympus. The rich indulged themselves in every luxury. Women, while their maids waited upon them, and dressed them, practiced upon their female slaves cruelty of such a kind that one would think that everything feminine had gone out of them. Slaves were tortured and put to death and nothing was ever said about such common crimes. In the amphitheatre, into which the multitudes crowded, scores and even hundreds of gladiators died in a single dayslaying each other in mutual conflict to make a Roman holiday! The nation was full of corruption, bribery, filthiness. A few characters shone out brightly, the more renowned because they were so few, but the land, as a whole, was such that, if Vesuvius had belched forth a torrent of fire high enough to set all Italy in a blaze, and an earthquake had opened its mouth and swallowed it all up, there would have been as much justification for its destruction as for that of Sodom and Gomorrah of old!   
But Christianity came into Rome in the form of a poor fisherman and a tent-maker, and others like them. And they began to say, We must love each other. You who are rich must count it a privilege to help the poor. We must all fear and serve the one true God, for there is but one. And God has made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth. You are not to treat men with cruelty. You are not to have these bloody games. You are not to indulge these licentious propensities. The Lord Jesus Christ, Gods Son, has died to save us from sin and all its consequences. It was a very still small voice that was heard in Rome at firstand if it had not been for the supernatural power of God, it would speedily have been silenced! But its influence soon began to spread, for some of the rich men in the city and some of the soldiers on guard in Caesars palace, and many of the poor slaves embraced the new religion and everywhere they were renowned for kindness, gentleness, purity and love.   
Then wicked men said, We will put this new religion down, and horrible persecutions followed. But, notwithstanding all that the Christians suffered, Rome became leavened with the influence of Christianity. Byand-by, slavery passed away, cruelties were no longer indulged, the amphitheatre was abolished and many of the idol gods were broken in pieces. The one invisible God was worshipped and the world rose up like one that has been in an awful swoon, and dreamed dreadful thingsand she looked into the mirror and saw her face as though she had been born-again! Christ had come to seek and to save lost society and He did it in a marvelous way, as He can always do it and He will continue to do it, for this is the great errand of my Master, that wherever men are sunken in sin and vicewherever they are immersed in crime, or satisfied with their self-righteousnessHe has come to save them from it!   
Mark, also, that my Masters mission, while it is a gracious one and a great one, is a very complete one. He comes to seek, that is, to find, the lost. And coming into contact with lost humanity, He does not leave it lost, for He saves those whom He seeks.   
And what a condescending way of saving He has, for the text says, The Son of Man has come. He was no Son of Man onceHe was and always remains the eternal Son of God! But He deigned to take upon Him this poor Nature of ours. He became a Man like ourselvesa condescension so marvelous that though we hear of it now with little astonishment, yet, if we sat down to think it over, it would remain an unexplained mystery to bewilder us with its marvels of matchless Grace! Yes, the Son of God became the Son of Man! As such, He lived. As such, He bled away His life upon the Cross that He might redeem us! He has come as the Son of Man that He might lift us up to be the sons of God! And, blessed be His name, the deed is done and, by His Spirits power, its glorious results are still bringing untold blessings to all who trust Him!   
Just once more, what a practical aim our Savior had in coming here! Our Lord Jesus Christ did not come to propound a philosophy. He did not come to explode ancient errors. He did not come to keep abreast of the times. He did not come to do the pretty things that many ministers are trying to do nowadays. He did not come to be rhetorical. He did not come to be popular. He did not come that He might gain the esteem of the multitude. He came to seek and to save the lost! Would God that His Church would keep to the same kind of work! But His Church seems to me to act in a great measure as if she were in the world simply to show off her pretty self with all her fineriesto play her grand music and tickle the ears of people with a Sunday concert and I know not what of floral show to increase the attraction of it. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinnersand what are we who call ourselves His disciples, doing? Many of us are doing a thousand other things than this one great thing which alone is worthy of the service of the man who calls himself a Christian and who, therefore, ought to be one who is like Christ. He came to seek and to save the lost. Brothers and Sisters, try to get at this work as closely as you can. Whatever else you can or cannot do, do seek to be the means of saving souls! Whatever you can do, that is fine and grand and that will bring you into esteem among your fellow men, do try to save poor lost sinners, even though they should be among the lowest of the low and the poorest of the poor! Do try to do what you are called to do in your Masters name, for, by the power of His matchless Gospel, you, also, can seek the lost and bring them to Him to save them!   
Thus much about our Masters mission.   
II. Now I want, in the second place, to give a MESSAGE TO THE LOST ONES FROM MY TEXT.   
I do not know where you lost ones are, but here, somewhere, are some of you who know yourselves to be lost. I am not talking to these other people, but you and I will have a little conversation between ourselves.   
And, first, I ask you to think what an interest is excited about you. You are lost and it seems that earth and Heaven, too, are concerned about your being lost, for the Son of Man who is also the Son of God blends Heaven and earth in one in being concerned about you! Gods Church is interested in your salvation. Many Christians are praying for you and I am trying to speak out the common love of Christians to you. Because you are lost, we long that you may be saved! Suppose there is a little child in the familynot a very pretty child, not always quite clean, nothing very much to look at in anybodys eyes except her mothers. They are seven or eight in the family and the parents have not much time to waste in admiration of any one of them when they have to earn bread for so many. But, just now, little Mary is the principal object of thought in the family. Everybodys heart is taken up with Mary. There is nobody in the house who is not thinking of Marywhat is the reason? Why, Mary went out this morning, to go on an errand, and it is now evening and she has not come home! And they have been round to the police station, but they cannot find her. Mary is lost, so there is more thought of her than about Jane, or Hannah, or John, or Thomas, though, it may be, they are older and better children. But Mary, just now, is uppermost with everybody because Mary is lost!

It is so with regard to you, my dear Friend. You are in the uppermost thought of Christ just now, and you are in our uppermost thoughts, too, because you are lost. I do not want you to feel at all elated at being the subject of this interest, because it is not so much you, you know, or anything about you except the one fact that you are lost, which makes us so much interested in you!   
Presently there is such joy, such kissing and hugging, such delight, such singing because Mary is found. Perhaps you step in and look at Maryshe is just as commonplace a little baby as ever sat on a mothers knee, but still, you see, she had been lost and she has been found and, therefore, they are rejoicing over her with great joy. All the prominence that Mary gets is not due to her goodness, but to the fact of the love that cannot bear that she should be lost. And it is so with you, my dear Friend. We would move Heaven and earth about you if we could! We would suspend the angels songs and bid them lean upon their harps and look on, while all Heaven and earth, in the Person of the WellBeloved, are seeking and saving that which is lost! So I bid you remember what interest is excited about you!   
Next, notice what power and what wisdom are engaged concerning youyou poor lost body over there! The Son of Man has come to seek and to save you! It is not that the preacher is laboring to save the lost, but, you see, the pearly gates are swinging back on their golden hinges the Kings Palace gates are opening and there is One passing through whose coming to the earth astounds cherubim and seraphim! It is He who descends, disrobing Himself as He comes down, hanging up His royal rings like new stars, doffing His azure mantle and stretching it across the sky, for, as George Herbert quaintly says, He has new clothes a-making down below! He comes here, to this poor earth, and you see Him as a babe at Bethlehem and a boy at Nazareth. Being here, He stoops continually lower and lower till He reaches the deepest depths of all upon the Cross of Calvary. And, all the while He goes about His daily task hunting for such as you! And what He literally did when He was here, He is still doing by the Divine SpiritHe is stall watching, still waiting, still seeking, still going round the earth hunting after the los!   
It ought to greatly encourage you who are lost when you remember that there is such an One as the Lord Jesus Christ who has come after you. A child, lost in the woods, sits down and cries. The night is coming on, she is very weary and her sad little heart has only one comfort. Father will begin to hunt after me, directly. He comes home and when mother tells him that his little girl is lost, he will search for me all night long. Father knows the forest trails and knows where I have been known to stray. Father will find me before the morning, so I will lay me down and sleep. And, dear lost one, you may have even more confidence that the Savior will search for you! Do not give up in despair because Jesus seems so long in coming to find you. He has piercing eyes to see you and swift feet to leap oer mountains after youand a ready hand to grasp you and strong shoulders on which to bear His wandering sheep home to the fold above. There is hope for you, lost one, for the Son of Man has come, bringing all His Godhead with Him and, in the Infinity of His power, and wisdom and love, He is seeking to save just such sinners as you!   
I want you, however, to notice another thingyou lost one, I mean, for you and I are supposed to be talking together tonight. Do you see what trouble you have caused? The little child is troubled at being lost, but think what trouble there is at home on her account! Last Wednesday morning there came into my study a Brother-minister and I saw at once that he was in terrible trouble, He had come to see me about something else, but I could not help saying to him, You have some great sorrow on your heart, have you not? He answered, Yes, I have. I lost my wife a year and a half ago, and that was a great grief to me, but I have a trial now which seems to cut me to the heart almost more than that bereavement did. What is that? I asked, and he replied, Last Sabbath morning, when I went to preach, I thought my boy had come into the Chapel with me, but, after the service, I could not find him. I went home, but he did not come in to dinner, and I could not get any tidings of him anywhere. I had to preach, in the evening, with a heavy heart, for I still could not find him, and I spent the greater part of the night with others searching everywhere for him. And now, he said, it is Wednesday and I have not found him, nor have I heard a word concerning him.   
Oh, you should have seen how sad he looked! It is my eldest boy, he said, and he is lost. Up to this present moment, I believe that he has not heard anything of him. He would compass the whole land to find him, I know, but he does not know where to look for him. The boy is lost and, possibly, he does not know what trouble he is giving his father and all his friends. If he did, he would very soon be home. Ah, and sinners give great trouble because they are lost. You have heard what trouble sinners gave to the Lord Jesus Christ. That death of His upon the Cross was part of the trouble that fell upon His great heart because we will sinbecause we will be lostbecause we will not turn to Him and live. What trouble many of you sinners give to your friends on earthand what trouble you gave to the Lord Jesus Christ! It threw Him into a bloody sweat even to think of you as lost and to take your place and bear the penalty of your guilt.   
There is one other reflection, which will not, I hope, wipe out this one. That is, what joy you would give if you were found! Oh, what clapping of hands there would be and what singing of songs of thanksgiving in your home, if you have a pious mother or a godly father! Sometimes, members of this Church come to speak with me and I know, by their manner, that there is something very joyful that they have to tell me. They do not laughthey seem very quiet about their joy but there is a deep undercurrent of gladness. One said to me, lately, God has been very gracious to me, for both my son and my daughter have just found the Savior. You know that fathers and mothers, when they are right-hearted, are much more glad about such good news as this than they are when they say, My son has gained a fortune, or, My daughter has married into a rich family. Oh, yes, to be able to say they are saved is the best thing that can possibly be said about them! I feel such gladness as I can never express when I think of my own dear sons, whom God has brought to the feet of Jesus and called to preach the Gospel which their father loves! O you poor sad sinners, you would be the cause of great joy on earth if you came to Christand you would make Christ Himself glad, too! That is the greatest wonder of allthat He who sits upon the Throne of God in ineffable bliss, can have an increase to His joy if you are saved! Yet we know that it is so, for there is joynot only among the angelsbut Christ said, there is joy in the Presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. That is to say, it is God Himself who has the joy, and Christ who rejoices over one sinner that repents!   
That is my special word with you, poor lost sinners. May God bless it to you and may you speedily be found by the seeking Savior!   
III. Now I come to the closing portion of my discourse which is to be a WORD TO OURSELVES.   
My dear Brothers and Sisters, the workers in this Church, I want to speak to you and to myself. And what I want to say is just thisif Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, has come to seek and to save that which was lost, what honorable work is yours and mine when we try to be the means of saving souls! The Grand Worthy Chief Master of the Confraternity of Soul-Sinners is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Those who belong to that blessed company have Jesus Christ as their Head. I always feel that it is a high honor to be a minister of the Gospel when I remember what the old Puritan said. He said that the Lord God had only one Son, and He made a Minister of Himwhat could He do better with Him? So, today there is no higher rank on earth than that of a winner of souls! Be you in whatever position in life you may, if you are seeking to bring eternal salvation to men, you have far higher employment than falls to the lot of the mightiest of earths kings and princes!   
Next, think how thorough your efforts ought to be in this work. You ought to go after souls, to seek them, as the Son of Man came to seek them. If they will not come into the place where you usually speak, go and speak to them where they are. If you have not got the children you want to have in your class in the Sunday school, go and seek to bring them in and then, when you have sought them and gathered them around you, do not be satisfied till they are saved! It is a great mercy to have the House of Prayer filled with people listening to the Gospel. I am always glad to see such a sight, but oh, if you hearers are not saved, what is the good of your coming here? If my Master will not give me your souls for my hire, I can scarcely thank Him for allowing me to preach to you, for I am doing you harm rather than good, being the savor of death unto death, rather than of life unto life, if you hear the Word, but are not saved by it! O dear unsaved souls, we can never be satisfied concerning you until you are truly converted to God! Dear Christian workers, do not rest until those who listen to the Gospel message believe it and so find eternal salvation!   
Notice next how naturally some of you ought to take to the work of soulwinning. When a child is lost, who should seek it? Why, its mother and father, of course! They are sure to do so. Well, do you seek the souls of your own children? Do you pray for them? Do you try, by your teaching, and by your example, to bring them to Christ? If you do not, shame on you that you bear the Christian name! I hope all of you who are Christian parents are seeking the salvation of your own children. The next person to go in search of a lost child, after its parents, I should think, is its brother. A lad hears that his dear little sister is lost. I see the hot tears in the boys eyes as he says, Mother, I will go anywhere, I will go everywhere if I can but find her. Well, now, you who are brothers, you who are related to one anotherand you are all brothers of the one great human familyyou all ought, for that very reason, to be concerned about finding these lost ones! But if there is one member of the family who is affected the most by the loss of the child, it is, probably, the older sister who was especially charged to take care of it. Or if the big brother is responsible, because the child was entrusted to his charge, he will not be able to bear himself! He will cry, Oh, that I should have lost her!that I should be the cause of her wandering away! He will not rest at night, I am sure, unless he has found her.

Some of us are very specially put in charge of souls. You are teachers. You are evangelists. You are ministers and I am, as I know full well. What if I should ever be the cause of the loss of any one of you? I would not have it so. God grant that it may never be, that any word of mine, spoken in a thoughtless manner, or anything that I might say too coldly, or with too much levity, should ever lead an immortal spirit to turn away from hope and from the Lord Jesus Christ! It would be a dreadful thing if that were to happenand if it ever has, let us henceforth be among the first to seek to find those who have gone astray.   
I will tell you, too, who would be sure to look after a lost child, and that is a child who was once lost and who has been found. It may have happened years ago, but the lad says to his mother, I know what it is to be lost, for I was once lost in the woods. Let me go and find the little one, as somebody came and found me. You who know the smart of sin, the sorrow that sin brings, will be among the very first to try to find the lost ones. I am sure you will, so I scarcely need say a word to urge you to this holy service.   
Then there are those who are acquainted with the ground where the lost ones arethey are sure to go seek them. A child lost in our London streets will probably be found again, but a child lost in the backwoods of America may never be discovered until its bones are found. We who know the dangers of the roadthat roaring lion, those pitfalls and trapswe cannot but feel that we must be among the first to go to seek the lost!   
*Oh, come, let as go and find them!   
In the paths of death they roam.   
At the close of the day twill be sweet to say, I have brought some lost one home.*   
And we may, with great hopefulness, go about the work of seeking the lost because there is One with us, in the seeking party, who is sure to find them. Come, we say to one another, let us gather together, and let us go and search the woods to find the lost one. But we know so little about the work and we are so weak and feeble that we soon become dispirited. But here comes the One who is going to lead the search party! You know Him! Look at His pierced hands and feet and brow. Mark that ensign of the Son of Man, the spear gash in His side. Look at His dear face! Was there ever on any other countenance, such beauty of compassionate love? He comes forward, girt with His golden belt, with His eyes brighter than flames of fire, and He says, I will lead the search. You take your orders from Me. I will tell you where to go and I will go with you. And so My lost ones shall all be found.   
Dear Master, we are only too glad to go on such an errand! You shall not have to tell us twice and if any of us are inclined to linger, we think we see You lift Your pierced hand and say, Who will go for Me? And whom shall I send? And many of us, rising in our seats, would gladly raise our hand and dedicate ourselves from this very moment to this blessed service, each one of us saying, Here am I Lord! Send me.   
Go thus, Brothers and Sisters, in the Holy Spirits might, and in your Saviors name! And may He enable you to bring home, with rejoicing, many of the lost onesand to Him shall be all the glory forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MATTHEW 21:23-46.**

Verse 23. And when He was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him as He was teaching and said, By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority? Jesus knew that these men came to Him for no good purpose, and that they were only trying to trip Him up in His speech. He was always willing to teach when men were willing to learn, but He did not care to cast His pearls before swine. Therefore, mark the holy caution, the sacred ingenuity with which our Lord replied to these men.

24-27. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, where was it from? From Heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we say, From Heaven, He will say unto us, Why did you not, then, believe him? But if we say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a Prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. He carried the war into the enemys camp. He answered His accusers by asking them a question which they could not answer in either way without condemning themselves!

28-32. But what do you think? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, Sir: and went not. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said unto Him, The first. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and you believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and you, when you had seen it, repented not afterward, that you might believe him. Those poor fallen women and degraded tax gatherers practically said, by their conduct, We will not serve the Lord. Their past evil life had been a deliberate rejection of the authority of God and yet, when John the Baptist came, they repented and they believed! Each of them had said, like the elder son, I will not, yet they did! But as for these chief priests and elders, who all their lives had been outwardly serving the Lord and saying, We will go and work in Gods vineyard, when John came and pointed them to Gods own Son, they would not accept Him.

They had, just now, by refusing to tell whether the Lords messenger was from Heaven or of men, again rejected Him and proved that they had not repented. They did not believe Johnthey had themselves confessed that it was soand, therefore, out of their own mouths they were condemned! I wonder whether there is any lesson in this parable to some who are here. I should not be surprised if there is. I hope that there are some among you who up to now have said, I will not go, who will repent and go and serve your God! And, on the other hand, it is to be feared that there may be some here who have always been saying, I go, Sir, who nevertheless have not gone and, perhaps, never will gobut will remain to the last, disobedient to the command of God. The Lord grant that it may not be so!

33-41 . Hear another parable. There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They said unto Him, he will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen which shall reader him the fruits in their seasons. You see at once how this parable related to the leaders of the Jewish people! From generation to generation, they scorned the Prophets of God, persecuted them and put them to death. And when our Lord Himself appeared, though His Glory might easily have been seen by them, yet they cast Him out from among them and put Him to death!

Yet, beloved Friends, we must never regard the Scriptures as referring only to strangers and people of past ages! We must also look to see what bearing they have upon ourselves. The rejection of Gods Prophets is the sin of our common humanity. And the murder of the Son of God was the crime, not of the Jews only, but of the whole human race. We, too, have a share in it, for we have rejected the Son of the Highest. But we were not there, you say. No, and yet we may have repeated that terrible tragedy in our own lives. God has sent you many messengers and if you remain, at this moment, unconverted, you have not treated them well, otherwise you would have yielded your heart to God. Some of them you have rejected by your neglect and others have been the subject of your ridicule and contempt. Against some you have reacted violently, for your conscience has been touched and you have had to do violence to conscience in order to reject their message!

Last of all, the Son of God Himself has come to you in the preaching of the Gospel. You have heard of His death and of His atoning Sacrifice, but you have rejected them and, in acting thus, you have done, as far as you could, the same as they did who crucified the Savior! You still refuse to have Him for your Savior. You disown Him as your King. You strive against His righteous sway. You tell me that you do not. Well, then, you have yielded to Him and you are saved. But if that is not the case, you still remain such an adversary of God that you reject His Son! Take care lest of you, also, that prophecy should become trueHe will miserably destroy those wicked men and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42. Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in the Scriptures? What a question this was for our Lord to put to men who professed to have the whole of the Scriptures at their fingertips and to be the only qualified interpreters of them! Did you never read in the Scriptures?

42, 43. The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the chief cornerstone: this is the Lords doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And, at this day, we Gentiles enjoy the privileges of the Gospel, while poor Israel is scattered to the four winds of Heaven! But He that spared not the natural olive, will not spare the engrafted branches if we are found unfruitful. God takes the Gospel away from one nation and gives it to another. But if it is not accepted by the other one and if He has not all the Glory of it ascribed to Him, He will take it away from that nation, too! He may deal thus with usif England becomes and remains a drunken nation, a cruel nation, a proud nation, an unbelieving nation, a superstitious nation and brings forth the evil fruits of the vine of Sodomwe may not expect that God will always continue His Kingdom among us! He will say to us, as Christ said to these chief priests and elders, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44. And whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken. If you stumble over Christ, the chief Cornerstone of Gods building, you will be broken in pieces! If you reject Him, you shall suffer serious loss!

44. But on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. If you arouse the wrath of Christ and the Rock of Ages falls on youa huge cliff comes toppling from its lofty height upon the traveler and crushes him past all recognitionyou will be ground to powder.

46, 46. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spoke of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a Prophet. Unhappy peop1e, to reject Him who alone could bless them and yet to stand in fear of Him whom they tried to despise! Let it not be so with any of us, but may Jesus become our Teacher, our Friend and our Savior forever, by His abounding Grace! Amen.

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THE ERRAND OF MERCY   
NO. 3050

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 25, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
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**For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10.**

GOD came down from Heaven but once to be united with human flesh. On what errand did He come and who were the objectives of it? What messenger was sent on that errand? What method was pursued by Him? With what success was it attended? Our text gives us the informationThe Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Let us speak briefly upon these four points.

I. First, AS TO THE OBJECTIVE OF CHRISTS ERRANDThe Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.   
That word, lost, is constantly applied by desponding and despairing persons to themselves. Such people say, We are lostwe feel that we are lost, wholly lost. There is no hope for us. Herein they betray both their ignorance and their unbelieftheir ignorance, for to be lost is nothing so peculiar that they should claim to be heritors of a strange doom since the whole human race is lost! And their unbelief since Christ came especially to seek and to save the lost. Therefore, their being lost is not a ground for despair, but may be construed into a ground of hope! Let us think over that word, lost, and see in what sense those are lost whom Christ came to save.   
Christ came to save those who were lost hereditarily. You often hear people say, Man is in a state of probation. No such thing! There is no man now in a state of probation. Adam was in a state of probation and man in Adam was in a state of probation in the Garden as long as he stood in obedience to the test that was given. He was upon his trial, but the moment that Adam tasted of the forbidden fruit, the probation was overhe was a lost man! And our probation was over, too, for we were lost in him. Man, in this world, is either in a state of condemnation or a state of salvation. He that believes not is not in a state of probationhe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. We have Divine authority for this. A man who has believed in Jesus is not in a state of probation, for there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and, Beloved, now are we the sons of God. The fact is that we are all absolutely lost through the sin of Adam and we need a Revelation to show us that we are absolutely saved in the righteousness of Christ! It is not a question whether I shall fall or notI have fallen in Adam. By one mans disobedience, says the Apostle, many were made sinners. I stood in Adam as long as he stood, but when Adam fell, he so represented me and all my kith and kin, that I fell in himand fell so as to be hopelessly and forever lostif Jesus Christ had not stepped in to seek and to save that which was lost.   
We are lost, again, in another sense. We are lost naturally. It is supposed by some that man has it now in his power to choose his own character and so become the arbiter of his own destiny. They say that his nature is, at first, in such a state of equilibrium that he can select either the strait and narrow path of rectitude, or pursue the broad road which leads to destruction. No, my dear Friends, both Scripture and experience teach us otherwise! We are born with natures that incline towards that which is evil and never of themselves tend towards that which is good! Behold, says David, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Well did Job ask, Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one. How, then, can he be pure who is born of a woman who is herself sinful? How can we, who are impure, be the parents of pure children? Such a thing is not possible! The whole head of human nature is sick and the whole heart faint. Naturally from our very birth we go astray, speaking lies! There is written upon human nature, by the finger of our first parent, this word, Lost!lost to God, therefore lost to the virtuous exercise of the affections and the true balance of the judgment, lost to rectitude, the will lost to obedience, the mental vision lost as to a sight of God, the moral sense lost as to that proper sensibility of conscience by which it shall stand out against sin. The reigning power in man is dislodged from its placemanhoods glory, his victory and integrity lost, lost foreverunless some greater Man shall restore it. This is how we truthfully describe the whole human race and so, surely, those whom Christ came to save were hereditarily and naturally lost.   
Among these, there are some so totally lost to all feeling that they do not know they are lost. Even the preaching of the Gospel does not suffice to bring them to a consciousness of their condition. Their conscience has become seared and their heart hardened by perversity in sin. If they once knew what it was to tremble at the wrath to come, that time is past. Even the wooing of Divine Mercy fall upon them as oil would fall upon marble and runs off without producing any effect. They wish they could feel. They envy souls that despair and wish that they could, themselves, despair. They despair, however, of ever being able to get into a good enough state of heart to despair! If anything is felt, they say, tis only pain to find we cannot feel, and not much of that is felt. Now, even such Jesus Christ came to saveand we know this because such were some of us! Do not I recollect the time when I would have given my eyes for a tear and would have been willing to suffer anything if I could have but bent my knees and uttered one groan? But my heart would not yield a sigh or my eyes a tear! I turned to the Book of God but that did not move me. I listened to the preacher without emotion. It seemed as if even a dying Saviors groans could never move a heart so base as mineand yet I bear witness that Christ came to save such, for I do myself rejoice in His salvation! You who are lost to all feeling may well catch at this text, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.   
Then there are others who are lost to all hope. It is in vain that you pray with them. They rise up from their knees and thank you for your prayers, but they are assured that God will never hear them. They sometimes praynecessity drives them to their kneesbut they pray with the conviction that they are merely talking to a God whose mind is made up about them and determined to cast them forever from His Presence. Comforts that are available to others are of no use to them. You may skillfully seek to adjust your consolation so as to suit their case, but they ward off your comfort as skillfully as a warrior guards himself from the enemys arrow with his shield. They will not hear a word of comfort, charm you ever so wisely. They have made up their minds that there cannot be anything in the Book of God for them except thunder and lightning and a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. Yes, and if they had their own names put in the Bible and a promise appended to their names, they would deny their own names and the promise too! They have come to be in such a state of subjection to that tyrant, Unbelief, that they say, Never shall we have hope. It is impossible that such sinners as we are, should ever be partakers of eternal life. If you ask them the reason for their despair, they cannot always tell you. No, they say, we would not tell any man living what we have done and what we feel. In one case it is some overwhelming sin. In another case it is having resisted at certain periods the convictions of conscience. Or yet again, it is old agetheir having been living so long a time in impenitence. They have all different arguments and none of them are the arguments of truth.

They believe Satans lie that God is not willing to forgive, in preference to Gods own oathAs 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. I do not know how it is that these poor souls manage to get away from such texts as theseAll manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. And such an one as thisThis is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. I say again that I do not know how they escape from the soothing influence of such words of hope, but they do manage, by some means, to fly from them! And still they hug their chains and sit in a sort of willful bondage in the darkness of their dungeon. Yet Jesus came to save just such sinners as those and there are some here of elastic step and bright eyes who once were bound in affliction and iron! But you have been brought out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death and Christ has broken your bonds asunder! You can now sing praises unto God and your songs shall testify to others, who were your fellow captives, that Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save that which was lost.   
Some whom Christ saves are lost socially. Their names are not mentioned in the familythey would bring such a pang to the mothers heart, such a flush to the fathers cheek. They could not now enter into any respectable societythey are marked men and marked women. There are some who are lost even before the law of the land. The hand of justice has been laid upon them and they are held in bonds under the law. It may be that they are even marked as felons. Yet the Son of Man has come to seek and to save those who are socially lost! When the gates of society are shut, the gates of Mercy are not shut. When man considers the case to be utterly hopeless and the social outcasts are put into a sort of leper colony lest the infection should spread, Jesus walks into the colony and touches the leper and says, Be you clean. You may shut them out from yourselves, but not from the Savior! When they have come to their worst and have run the whole round of dissipation till they are jaded and sick, still can the Master step in and whisper into that ear rendered attentive by pain and sicknessand snatch the fire-brand from the flameto the Glory of His own Grace!  
Others whom the Savior doubtless came to save, were, at one time, lost avowedly and determinedly. There have been those who have made a league with Satan and a covenant with death. They have said, Turn to God? Never! We will burn first. They have not only resisted conscience, but they have, as it were, proclaimed war to the knife against God Himself! They have called Heaven and earth to witness that they were the slaves of Satan and had chosen him to be their masterand would serve him to their dying hour! Yet their covenant with death has been broken and their league with Hell has been broken! God has, by mighty Grace, made them quite as decidedly His servants as they were once the servants of the Evil One! Oh, what has not Grace done, and what can it not still do? Take the word, lost, in the very worst possible sense that you can attach to it and still my text shall apply to it alsoThe Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.   
Perhaps of all lost souls, the most miserably lost are those who perish under the sound of the Gospel. There are some of you who have been prayed over, preached at and wept over year after year till you seem to be hopeless cases. You yourselves feel that there is a hardness which is begotten in the light of the Gospel which is not begotten anywhere else. The same sun which melts wax hardens clay and it has hardened you after an awful fashion till, now, you really dread to hear the Gospel lest you should drift still further away from God! Well, even such lost ones Jesus came to save! I am conscious that my language cannot sufficiently express the extent to which the word, lost, may be applied. Some of you think there is very little difference between you and the damned in Hell they feel the flameyou are waiting for it. You feel that they are undergoing the execution while you are in the condemned cell. They have heard Christ say, Depart, you cursed. You feel that you are cursed though He has not yet said to you, Depart. You think (though you think wrongly, let me say), that your death warrant has been signed and sealedyou declare that you might as well be banished from this world, for you know that if you live ever so long, you will live and die without hope and without God! Ah, poor Soul! Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save just such sinners as you are! And I trust, notwithstanding all you say to the contrary, He has come to seek and to save youeven you.   
Such are the woe-begone objects of this mission of mercy! Now let us turn to the Messenger of mercythe Savior of the lost!   
II. If the lost are to be saved, someone of extraordinary character must come to do it. No, IF THEY ARE TO BE SOUGHT AND FOUND, THERE MUST BE A SPECIAL MESSENGER.   
Ordinary men, if they go to seek the lost ones, soon grow weary in the search. Perhaps they have to seek them where pride does not like to go, or to follow them when their perseverance fails and their patience cannot endure. It needs a special One to seek the lost. But when the sinner is found, who can save the found one? No human arm is long enough, no human merits strong enough, no human plea prevalent enoughit is delightful, therefore, to read that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.   
Who is this Son of Man? Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Though peerless in dignity, He assumes a humble title with a lowly estate when He condescends to undertake this menial service. Before He came to be the Son of Mary, He was the eternal Son of God! He sat upon the Throne of His Glory, adored by the spirits which His own hand had made, but He came down from yonder starry sky to seek and save the lost! This proves how full of pity, how condescending and how kind was Gods eternal Son. Lost one, here is some comfort for you! If Jesus, from His Throne of Glory, pitied you in your lost estate and if it is the same pitying One who is come to seek and to save the lost, then is He not the One to find and to save you?   
But remember who He is, the Son of Man. He gives Himself that title, the Son of Man! He feels as you feel. He was tempted in all points like you are tempted. He never had a single sin of His own, but He bore the sins of many and He knows what the weight of sin is. You think Christ has forsaken you and Christ once thought His Father had forsaken HimMy God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? He cried. You are broken in heart. He knows what that means for He said, Reproach has broken My heart. You think that all Gods waves and billows have gone over you. He said they had all gone over Him and in very truth they had! It is not possible that you should have a grief deeper than that which the Savior knew. You cannot plunge lower than He went. What if I say that though sin is come over you so that you cannot look up, there cannot be so black a cloud of sin between you and God as there was once between the Substitute and the Fatherfor ALL the sins of His elect ones rolled like an oceans tempest between the God of Justice and the Surety who was smitten in our place! Think of Christ, you who are lost, as being just such an One as yourself, except in the matter of sinpoor, having not where to lay His headdestitute, afflicted and tormented as much as you can be. He is the Son of Man! Oh, rest you upon that tender bosom and confide in that compassionate heart!   
If it were merely that He came from Heaven, it would be a proof of love and a token of sympathy, but that is not enough. It is written, He is come to seek and to save. Here is a proof of His activity. He does not sit still and pity men, does not stand up and propose a plan for them, but He is come to seek and to save them! The angels celebrated His Advent when they sang, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. The Son of Man is come! They watched Him in His journey through the 30 years of His earthly pilgrimage and they seemed to sing, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save. But how the song must have deepened with a wondrous emphasis when they saw Him sweating great drops of blood in Gethsemane, when they saw Him bound, scourged and tormented by the Roman soldiers, when they saw Him bearing the weight of the Cross, when they marked Him fastened to the accursed tree, pouring out His soul in streams of blood! How they must have felt, then, that the Son of Man was come to seek and to save! Earth heard the note, The Son of Man is come. Sin heard it and Death heard itand when the Savior bowed His head upon the Cross, there went up a great shout, The Son of Man is come! And startled Hell heard it when Satan saw those whom he had expected to be his prey, delivered by the strong arm of the dying Sufferer! Heaven heard it as the peal rolled upward and angels said, The Son of Man is come to bring up here that which was lost. So, then, there is activity in the Savior and on this you may rely!   
I shall say but little more concerning the Savior, except these few thoughts on which you may meditate at your leisure. He who has come to save the lost, loved sinners from before the foundation of the world, was appointed of God to be their Savior, comes on a Divine mission clothed with the Spirit of Power, comes with an atoning Sacrifice in His hands, comes with a plea in His mouththe voice of blood, which speaks better things than that of Abelcomes with love beaming from His eyes and overpowering compassion in His heart! He comes not to those who come to Him, but to those who cannot come and are afraid to come! The Son of Man, none other than He who said, I am meek and lowly of heart, has come to seek and to save the lost!

III. Now notice THE PLAN OF THIS LOVING COMMISSION.   
It does not say, He is come to save merely, but, to seek and to save. It is an astounding thing and a great proof of human depravity that men do not, themselves, seek salvation. They even deny the necessity of it and would sooner run away than be partakers of it! If you pass by a dispensary in the morning, you will often see the poor outpatients at the door. And when the time comes for the doctor to see them, many will be found waiting in his outer room, but you do not often hear of a doctor who goes out seeking for gratis patients. But my Savior not only cures, but seeks the patients outand if He did not, He would never have patients, for our sickness is of a kind that never brings men to the Physician, but drives them farther and farther from Him!   
He is come to seek them. He seeks them by the Gospel. Tonight He seeks some of you. He seeks them by Providence. Sometimes His rough Providences seek them. At other times the daily mercies of His goodness beckon them to come. He seeks them by the death of their fellowsa mothers dying bed, the snatching of a baby to Heavenall these are the ways in which Jesus is seeking that which was lost. He seeks them effectually by His Spirit. His Spirit comes and reveals to them their darkness, points them to Christ, the true Light, and thus clearly they are found out, just where they are, and stand discovered to themselves in their ruin.   
But it is added that He not only came to seek, but to save. Oh! says one, I dont need any seeking. I am found. Convinced of my folly, here I sit, and acknowledge my sin. I am indeed sought out and found, but I need saving. Now, Friend, the Son of Man has come to save the lost, as well as to seek them. And He does it in this wayHe saves them from the guilt of past sin. In one moment, as soon as ever the blood of Christ is applied to the conscience, every past sin is gone and the man is, in Gods sight, as if He had never sinned. Christ puts away iniquity in a moment. The next thing He does is that He kills the power of sin within and makes the man a new creature. He does not merely save him from the guilt of the past, but from the power of sin in the present! If He does not tear up sin by the roots, He at least cuts it down. And sin does not have dominion over us because we are not under the Law, but under Grace. The man who has trembled long, trembles no longer! He who was sinking deeper and deeper in the mire feels that there is a new song in his mouth and that his goings are established. And as He saves him from the power of sin in the present, so He saves him from future falling. He saves, not only for a year, or for ten years and then lets men fall, but He finally and completely saves that which was lost! And this one act will enable you, sinner, to realize all this blessednesscast your guilty soul on Him who saves you! Do this with your whole heart and your sin is blotted out your soul is saved and you may go in peace!   
IV. Lastly, let us rejoice in THE SUCCESS OF THIS BLESSED SCHEME. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Does He succeed in what He came to do? He does, thank God! And in these later times we live to see how the Master saves that which was lost. The opening of the theatres for the preaching of the Word has been a very blessed thing. The raising up of Evangelists who have gone throughout the land preaching the Word has been a proof that the Son of Man has not ceased to seek and to save! When I look back to 11 years ago, when I commenced my pastorate in London, [1851] I recollect that there seemed to be very little care, then, about the preaching of the Word. We could not, then, do what we now cancount up some 20 Evangelists always going through the country, and all of them in their measure useful menI mean such men as Richard Weaver, Reginald Radcliffe and Brownlow North and a great many others, all in their way adapted to the work. It seemed then as if the Church of Christ had given up seeking the lostbut God has raised up one and another for the purpose of preaching the Word, fulfilling this Scripture, that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.   
Some say, If the people want to hear the Gospel, let them go to church or chapelthey can always hear the Gospel when they like. That is not Christs way! We are to go and seek them! Open-air preaching is a blessed institution and though you may sometimes block up a thoroughfare, it is better to do that than that the thoroughfare to Hell should be crowded! If you can turn a soul from the road to Hell, it will not matter though you may turn some passenger in the street out of his way, so that he may have to muddy his boots! Midnight services, hunting after the poor sinners in the streets at midnight, the opening of Ragged Schools and Reformatoriesall these things are the fulfilling of the word, The Son of Man is come to seek that which was lost.   
We know that He seeks, but does He save them? If I must give an answer from my own observation, I can point to many members of this congregation and say, Save them? Indeed He does! Has He not delivered them from the bonds of sin? Has He not made them new creatures in Christ Jesus? But if you look anywhere, wherever a faithful Gospel is preached, you will see that salvation-work does go on! I hope it may go on with us for many and many a year until Christ shall come. Christ is not disappointed in the souls He came to save. All for whom He stood as Substitute shall sing His praise in Heaven. He has not redeemed souls that may afterwards be cast into Hell. He did not suffer for my sins that I might suffer for them, too! His Atonement is effectual! Every sinner He died to save He does save. He is not foiled at any point, nor disappointed in any single aim. The lost He came to seek and save, He finds and saves! And in eternity we shall find, when turning over the register of the chosen, that every one of them has been gathered around the Eternal Throne singing the praise of His Sovereign Grace!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 19.**

Verses 1-5. And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, who was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at your house. Remember that the Lord Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to suffer and to die. And there He was, the patient, suffering Lamb of Godbut here He speaks in that commanding tone which well became the Prince of the House of DavidZacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at your house.

6. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. Solomon said, Where the word of a king is, there is power. Omnipotence went with the word of this King of kings, so Zacchaeus was bound to obey it.

7-11. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, for as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, He added and spoke a parable, because He was near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear. Their minds were full of thoughts concerning Christs coming as a King and they had very mistaken notions concerning His Kingdom, so He indicates to them that, for the present, the practical matter to be remembered was that He had come to seek and to save that which was lost. If they had not been so full of their idle dreams of a temporal sovereignty, they would have perceived that in the calling of Zacchaeus, Christ had manifested His Kingship in the realm of mercy and had there exercised the Sovereignty of His Grace. In order that they might be able the better to understand the meaning of His spiritual Kingdom and not have their eyes so dazzled by the illusions which had so long deceived the Jews, our Lord pointed out to them, in the parable of the pounds, the practical way of preparing for His Second Coming.

12-15. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. It would have been well if our translators, instead of using that ugly Latin word, occupy, had kept to the expression, trade with it, for here we get the same words againthat he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16. Then came the first, saying, Lord, your pound has gained ten pounds. The genuine servant, with due humility, puts himself in the background. It is not he who has gained ten poundsit is his lords pound that has done it. He is pleased to bring the ten pounds, yet he claims no credit for himself, but says, Lord, your pound has gained ten pounds.

17. And he said unto him, Well, you good servant: because you have been faithful in a very little, have you authority over ten cities. There is no comparison between the servants work and the reward for its faithful performance. That ten pounds, if his lord had given it all to him, would not have bought a house in a village, unless it had been a very tiny one a cottage in a vineyard, or a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. Yet his lord gives him authority over ten cities.

18, 19. And the second came, saying, Lord, your pound has gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be you also over five cities. How he must have opened his eyes when he received authority over five cities!

20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is your pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin. The napkin with which he ought to have wiped away the sweat from his brow, he had used merely as a wrapper for the pound that his lord had entrusted to him for the purpose of trading with it. He had done nothing with the poundhe thought he was all right because he had not done any harm with his lords money. He had not joined the revolting citizens who said, We will not have this man to reign over us. He had not spent the pound, nor embezzled his masters moneyin fact, he had been very careful to keep intact the treasure that had been entrusted to himand he felt proud of his own prudence and said, Lord, behold, here is your pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.

21. For I feared you, because you are an austere man: you take up that you lay not down, and reap that you did not sow. This was impudence indeed! But his master took him on his own ground and showed that even if his statement had been true, he ought to have been the more diligent in obeying his lords command.

22, 23. And he said unto him, Out of your own mouth will I judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: therefore then gave not you my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required my own with usury? You might have done that, at any rate, even if you were afraid to trade with it, as I bade you. God often deals with men on their own ground and condemns them out of their own mouth. They say that God is very severe in threatening them with the wrath to come. Well, if you so believe and so speak, there is the more reason why you should fear to disobey Him and so to incur His just displeasure! If, in spite of such terrible threats, you still defy Him, it only brings out the more clearly the greatness of your guilt!

24, 25. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that has ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he has ten pounds). They were quite astonished. What? Give more to the man who has so much already? Yes, says the master, that is my command.

26. For I say unto you, That unto everyone which has shall be given; and from him that has not, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Hear again the note of sovereignty. Christ will do as He wills! And His mode of action shall sometimes be so singular that even His own attendants will wonder at the strangeness of His procedure and will begin to ask, How is this? But, as Elihu said to Job, He gives not account of any of His matters.

27-31. But those my enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring here and slay them before me. And when He had thus spoken, He went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He was come near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go you into the village over against you; in the which at your entering you shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him here. And if any man asks you, Why do you loose him? Thus shall you say unto him, Because the Lord has need of him. Here we see Christs true royalty again flashing out from beneath the humiliation of His Humanity! He lets us know that although He is going up to Jerusalem to die, it is not because He is not Lord of All! But that being Lord of All, He makes Himself of no reputation, takes upon Himself the form of a Servant, is made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbles Himself and becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

32-34 *.* And they that were sent went their way, and found even as He had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose you the colt? And they said, The Lord has need of him. The word of the King was again with power and the owners of the colt were willing to let the animal go since the King had need of him. They may have been secret disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we have no information upon that point. Our Kings warrant runs anywhereand even when His personal Presence is not consciously realized, His royal and Divine word still rules the minds and hearts of men!

35-38. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as He went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when He was come near, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen. Saying, Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord: peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest. They were so jubilant that they seemed to have caught some notes from the song that the angels sang at the Saviors birthGlory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. There had been war in Heaven, but these disciples of Christ sang, Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest.

39-41. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke Your disciples. And He answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it. What a contrast! The Kings courtiers shouting for joy and the King, Himself, weeping over the guilty city where the greatest tragedy in the history of the whole universe was about to take place! The King saw, in the near and more remote future, what no one else could see, so, when He was come near, and beheld the city, He wept over it.

42-48. Saying, If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you that your enemies shall cast a trench about you, and compass you round, and keep you in on every side, and shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you; and they shall not leave in you one stone upon another; because you knew not the time of your visitation. And He went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the House of Prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves. And He taught daily in the Temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy Him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear Him. There was a popular wave of enthusiasm in His favor but, alas, it soon ebbed away and then the multitudes that had cried, Hosanna! were just as loud in their shouts of, Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

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CHRIST THE SEEKER AND SAVIOR OF THE LOST   
NO. 3309

A SERMON   
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For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19:10.  **[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are Sermons #204, Volume 4 THE MISSION OF THE SON OF MAN; #1100, Volume 19GOOD NEWS FOR THE LOST; #2756 Volume 47SAVING THE LOST and #3050, Volume 53THE ERRAND OF MERCY   
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We have now considered six of the glorious achievements of our Divine Lord and Savior and it is time to conclude the series. [The other Sermons in the**

series are #1325, Volume 22CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW; #1326, Volume 22CHRIST THE CONQUEROR OF SATAN; #1327, Volume 22CHRIST THE OVERCOMER OF THE WORLD; #1328, Volume 22CHRIST THE MAKER OF ALL THINGS NEW; #1329, Volume 22CHRIST THE DESTROYER OF DEATH and #273, Volume 5CHRIST TRIUMPHANTread/download all these sermons free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] How shall we crown the edifice?

The best wine should be kept for the last, but where shall we find it? The choice is wide, but amid so many wonders, which shall we select? What shall be the seventh great work concerning which we shall extol Him? Many marvels suggested themselves to me and each one was, assuredly, worthy to occupy the place, but as I could not take all, I resolved to close with one of the simplest and most practical. His saving sinners seemed to me to be practically the chief of all His works, for it was for this purpose that the rest of His achievements were attempted and performed. Had it not been for the salvation of men, I know not that we had ever known our Lord as the Destroyer of Death or the Overcomer of Satan and, certainty, if He had not saved the lost, I am unable to perceive what Glory there would have been in the overcoming of the world, or in the creation of all things new. The salvation of men was the prize of His lifes racefor this He girded up His loins and distanced every adversary! The salvation of the lost was the joy which was set before Him, for the sake of which He endured the Cross, despising the shame.

Although it seems, at first sight, that in selecting our present topic we have descended from the transcendent glories of our Champion to more common things, it is, indeed, not so. The victories of our Lord which are written in the Book of the wars of the Lord, when He led captivity captive and robbed death of his sting, may strike us as more astounding, but yet in very truth this is the summing-up of His great worksthis is the issue, the flower, and crown of all! The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, is a sentence as majestic as Prophet ever penned when in fullest Inspiration he extolled the Prince of Peace!

I. Notice, first, OUR LORDS GRACIOUS MISSIONThe Son of Man is come.   
When He was here among men, He could use the present tense and say, is come. That was an improvement upon what Prophets had to say, for they only spoke of Him as The Coming Oneas One who, in the fullness of time, would be manifested. The promise was amazing, but what shall I say of the actual performance when the Word made flesh could say, The Son of Man is come? To us, today, the coming of Christ to seek and to save the lost is an accomplished fact, a matter of history, most sure and certain. And what a fact it is! You have often thought of it, but have you ever worked your mind into the very heart of itthat God has actually visited this world in human formthat He before whom angels bow has actually been here, in fashion like ourselves, feeding the hungry crowds of Palestine, healing their sick and raising their dead? I know not what may be the peculiar boast of other planets, but this poor star cannot be excelled, for on this world the Creator has stood! This earth has been trodden by the feet of God and yet it was not crushed beneath the mighty burden because He designed to link His Deity with our humanity! The Incarnation is a wonder of wonders, but it does not belong to the realm of imagination or even of expectation, for it has actually been beheld by mortal eyes! We claim your faith for a fact which has really taken place. If we asked you by faith to expect a marvel yet to come, we trust the Spirit of God would enable you to do so, that, like Abraham, you might foresee the blessing and be glad. But the miracle of miracles has been worked! The Son of the Highest has been here. From Bethlehem to Calvary, He has traversed lifes pilgrimage. Thirty years or more yonder canopy of sky hung above the head of Deity in human form. O wondrous joy! Say rather, O matchless hive of perfect sweets, for a thousand joys lie close compacted in the word, ImmanuelGod With Us! *Welcome to our wondering sigh.   
Eternity within a span!   
Summer in winter! Day in night!   
Heaven in earth! And God in man!   
Great Little One, whose glorious birth   
Lifts the earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to earth.*   
Our Lord had come upon His sacred mission as soon as He was really the Son of Man, for before He was known only as the Son of God. Others had borne the name of son of man, but none deserved it so well as He. Ezekiel, for reasons which we need not now stay to consider, is called, son of man, a very large number of times. Perhaps, like John in Christs own day, Ezekiel had much of the spirit and character which were manifest in our Lordand so the name was the more suitable to him. Certainly he had Christs eagle eyes, Christs spiritual Nature and was filled with light and knowledgeand so, as if to remind him that he who is like his Lord in excellence must also have fellowship with Him in lowliness, he is again and again reminded that he is still the son of man.   
When our Lord came into this world, He seemed to select that title of Son of Man for Himself and make it His own special nameand worthily so, for other men are the sons of this man or that, but His is no restricted humanityit is manhood of the universal type. Jesus is not born into the race of the Jews so much as into the human family. He is not to be claimed for any age, place, or nationalityHe is the Son of Man and this, I say, is how He comes to man. So that as long as Christ is the Son of Man, we may still say of Him that He comes to seek and to save the lost! I know that, in Person, He has gone back to Heaven. I know that the cloud has received Him out of our sight. But the very taking upon Himself of our humanity was a coming down to seek and save the lost and as He has not laid that Humanity aside, He is still with men, continuing to seek and to save even to this day! He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. So that, if I treat the text as if Jesus were still among us, I would not err, for He is here in the sense of seeking the same end, though it is by His Spirit and by His servants rather than by His own bodily Presence! He has said, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, and that saying is found in connection with the agency which He has established for seeking and saving lost men, by making men disciples and teaching them the way of life! As long as this dispensation lasts, it will still be true that the great Savior and Friend of man has come among us and is seeking and saving the lost!   
II. Now, secondly, let us see HIS MAIN INTENT IN COMING HERE BELOWThe Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. The intent breaks itself up into two points, the personsthe lost. And the purposethe seeking and the saving of them.   
Christs main intent in coming here bore upon the lost. Proud men do not like us to preach this Truth of God. It was but yesterday that I saw it alleged against Christianity that it discourages virtue and patronizes the guilty. They say that we ministers lift the sinful into the most prominent place and give them the preference above the moral and excellent in our preaching. This is a soft impeachment to which, in a better sense than is intended by those who bring it, we are glad to plead guilty! We may well be excused if our preaching seeks the lost, for these are the persons whom our Lord has come to seek and to save. The main stress and intent of the Incarnation of God in the Person of Christ lies with the guilty, the fallen, the unworthy, the lost. His errand of mercy has nothing to do with those who are good and righteous in themselves, if such there is, but it has to do with sinnersreal sinners, guilty not of nominal but of actual sinsand who have gone so far therein as to be lost! Why do you quibble at this? Why should He come to seek and to save that which is not lost? Should the Shepherd seek the sheep which has not gone astray? Answer me. Why should He come to be the Physician of those who are not lost? Should He light a candle and sweep the house to look for pieces of silver which are not lost, but lie bright and untarnished in His hand? To what purpose would this be? Would you have Him paint the lily and gild it with refined gold? Would you make Him a mere busybody offering superfluous aid? With those who think themselves pure, what has the cleaning blood of Jesus to do? Is the Savior a needless Person and was His work a needless business? It must be so if it is intended for those who do not need it!   
Who needs a Savior most? Answer this. Should not mercy exercise itself where there is most need for it? This world is like a battlefield over which the fierce hurricanes of conflict have swept and the surgeons have come to deal with those who lie upon its plains. To whom shall they go first? Shall they not turn first to those who are most terribly wounded and who are bleeding almost to the death? Will you quarrel with us if we declare that the first to be taken to the hospital should be those who are in direst need? Will you be angry if we say that the liniment is for the wounded, that the bandages are for the broken limbs and that the medicine is for the sick? A strange quarrel this would be! If ever it should begin, a fool must begin it, for no wise man would ever raise the question! Blessed Christ of God, we will not quibble because You also come in Your mercy to those who need You most, even to the lost!   
And who do you think will love Him best and so reward Him best if He comes to them? The proud Pharisee in his perfection of imaginary holinesswill he value the Christ who tells him that He comes to wash away his sin? He turns upon his heels with scorn! What sin has he to wash away? The self-satisfied moralist who dares to say, All these commands I have kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?is he likely to become a disciple of the Great Teacher whose first lessons are, Yet must be bornagain, and, Except you are converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? The fact is that Jesus has no form nor comeliness to those who have a beauty of their own! Christ gets most love where He pardons most sin. And the sweetest obedience to His command is rendered by those who once were most disobedient, but who are gently led beneath His sway by the force of grateful love. Yon sterile hills of fancied holiness yield Him no harvest and, therefore, He leaves them to their own boastfulness. But meanwhile, He scatters plenteous grain among the lowlands where the ground is broken and lies ready for the seed. He preaches pardon to those who know that they have sinned and confess the samebut those who have no sin, have no Savior.   
But after all, dear Friends, if Jesus did not direct His mission of salvation to the lost, to whom else could He have come? For truth to say, there are none but the lost on the face of this whole earth! The proudest Pharisee is but a sinner and all the more a sinner for his pride. And the moralist who thinks himself so clean is filthy in the sight of God! Though he labors to conceal the spots, the self-righteous man is a leper and will forever remain so unless Jesus cleanses Him. It is a thrice-blessed fact that Christ came to save the lost, for such are we alland had He not made lost ones the object of His searching and saving, there would have been no hope for us!   
What is meant by the lost? Well, lost is a dreadful word. I would need much time to explain it, but if the Spirit of God, like a flash of light, shall enter into your heart and show you what you are by nature, you will accept that word, lost, as descriptive of your condition and understand it better than a thousand words of mine could enable you to do! Lost by the Fall! Lost by inheriting a depraved nature! Lost by your own acts and deeds! Lost by a thousand omissions of duty and lost by countless deeds of overt transgressions! Lost by habits of sin! Lost by tendencies and inclinations which have gathered strength and dragged you downward into deeper and yet deeper darkness and iniquity! Lost by inclinations which never turn of themselves to that which is right, but which resolutely refuse Divine Mercy and Infinite Love! We are lost willfully and willinglylost perversely and utterly! But still lost of our own accord which is the worst kind of being lost that can possibly be! We are lost to God, who has lost our hearts love, lost our confidence and lost our obedience! We are lost to the Church, which we cannot serve. Lost to the Truth of God which we will not see. Lost to right, whose cause we do not uphold. Lost to Heaven, into whose sacred precincts we can never come! Lost

so lost that unless Almighty Mercy shall intervene, we shall be cast into the Pit that is bottomless to sink forever! LOST! LOST! LOST! The very word seems to me to be the knell of an impenitent soul. Lost! Lost! Lost! I hear the dismal tolling! A souls funeral is being celebrated! Endless death has befallen an immortal being! It comes up as a dreadful wail from far beyond the boundaries of life and hope, forth from those dreary regions of death and darkness where spirits dwell who would not have Christ to reign over them. Lost! Lost! Lost! Ah me, that ever these ears should hear that doleful sound! Better a whole world on fire than a lost soul! Better every star quenched and yon skies a wreck than a single soul to be lost!   
Now, it is for souls that soon will be in that worst of all conditions and are already preparing for it, that Jesus came here seeking and saving. What joy is this! In proportion as the grief was heavy, the joy is great. If souls can be delivered from going down into such a state, it is a feat worthy of God, Himself. Glory be to His holy name!   
Now note the purposeHe came to seek and to save that which was lost. Ah, this is a Truth of God worth preachingthis Doctrine that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save sinners. Some people tell me that He comes to make men salvableto put all men into such a condition that it is possible that they may be saved. I believe that men may be saved, but I see no very great wonder in the fact. It does not stir my blood, or incite me to dance for joy. I do not know that it makes even the slightest impression upon me! I can go to sleep and I am sure I shall not wake up in the night and long to get up at once to preach such poor news as that Jesus came to make men salvable! I would not have become a minister to preach so meager a Gospel! But that our Lord came to save menthat is substantial and satisfying news, far exceeding the other! To make men salvable is a skeleton, bones and skinbut to save them is a living blessing! To make men salvable is a farthing blessing, but to save them is untold wealth!   
They say also that Jesus came into the world to let men be saved if they will. I am glad of that. It is true and good. I believe that every truly willing soul may be saved, yes, such an one is, in a measure, saved already! If there is a sincere will towards salvationunderstand, towards true salvationthat very will indicates that a great change has commenced within the man and I rejoice that it is written, Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely. But now just read our text as if it ran thusThe Son of Man is come that whoever wills to be saved may be saved. The sense is good, but very feeble! How the wine is mixed with water! But, oh, what flavor, what essence, what marrow, what fatness there is in this, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost! This is the Gospel! And the other is but a part of the Good News. Again, read the text another way, The Son of Man is come to help men to save themselves. This will not do at all. It is something like helping men to march who have no legs, or helping blind men to judge colors, or helping dead men to make themselves alive. Help to those who can do nothing at all is a miserable mockery. No, we cannot have our Bibles altered that way! We will let the text stand as it isin all its fullness of Divine Grace!   
Nor is it even possible for us to cut down our text to this, The Son of Man is come to save those who seek Him. If it ran so, I would bless God forever for it, for it would be a glorious Gospel text even then. There are Scriptures which teach that Doctrine and it is a blessed Truth for which to be supremely grateful. But my text goes very much further, for it says, The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. I met with a question and answer the other day, Where did the Samaritan woman find the Savior? She found Him at the well. I do not quibble at that mode of expression, but mark you, that is not how I would ask the question! I should rather enquire, Where did the Savior find the woman? For, surely, she was not seeking HimI see no indication that she had any such idea in her mind! She was looking after water from the welland if she had found thatshe would have gone home satisfied. No, those are the finders, surely, who are the seekers! And so it must be that Christ found the woman, for He was looking after her. While I bless my Lord that He will save you if you seek Him, I am still more thankful that there are men and women whom He will seek as well as save! No, that there never was a soul saved yet but Christ sought it first! He is the Author as well as the Finisher of faith. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending of the work of Grace! Let His name be praised for it! The text must stand as it is and we will adore the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love which has made it true! Successful seeking and complete saving belong to the Son of Mansome of us have experienced both. Oh, that all of us might yet do so!   
III. Now we pass on, thirdly, to notice A DOUBLE DIFFICULTY. We see Christs errand and we at once perceive that He has come to deal with people who are lost in two senses and in each sense a miracle of Grace is needed for their deliverance. They are so lost that they need saving, but they are also so lost that they need seeking. Persons may be so lost on land or on sea as to need saving and not seekingbut we were spiritually lost so as to need both saving and seeking too.   
I heard, a little while ago, of a party of Friends who went to the lakes of Cumberland and endeavored to climb the Langdale Pikes. One of the many found the labor of the ascent too wearisome and so resolved that he would go back to the little inn from which they started. Being a wiser man than some, in his own esteem, he did not take the winding path by which they had ascended. He thought he would go straight down, for he could see the house just below, and fancied he should pitch upon it all of a sudden and show the mountaineers that a straight line is the nearest road! Well, after descending and descending, leaping many a rugged place, he found himself, at last, on a ledge from which he could go neither up nor down. After many vain attempts, he saw that he was a prisoner. In a state of wild terror, he took off his garments and tore them into shreds to make a line and, tying the pieces together, he let them down, but he found that they reached nowhere at all in the great and apparently unfathomable abyss which yawned below him. So he began to call aloud, but no answer came from the surrounding hills except the echo of his own voice! He shouted by the half-hour together, but there was no answer, neither was there anyone within sight. His horror nearly drove him out of his wits. At last, to his intense joy, he saw a figure move in the plain below and he began to shout again. Happily it was a woman, who, hearing his voice, stopped. And as he called again, she came nearer and called out, Stay where you are. Do not stir an inch. Stay where you are! He was lost, but he no longer needed seeking, for some friendly shepherds soon saw where he was. All he needed was savingand so the mountaineers descended with a rope, as they were known to do when rescuing lost sheepand soon brought him out of danger. He was lost, but he did not need seekingthey could see where he was.   
A month or two ago, you must have noticed in the papers a notice about a gentleman who had left Wastwater some days before to go over the hills and had not been heard of since. His friends had to seek him so that, if still alive, he might be saved. And there were those who traversed hill and moor to find him, but they were unable to save him because they could not find him. If they could have found out where he was, I do not doubt that had he been in the most imminent peril, the bold hill-men would have risked their lives to rescue him. But, alas, he was never found or savedhis lifeless corpse was the only discovery which was ultimately made. This last is the true image of our deplorable condition we are by nature, lostso that nothing but seeking and saving together will be of a service to us.   
Let us see how our Lord accomplished the saving. That has been done, completely done. My dear Friends, you and I were lost in the sense of having broken the Law of God and having incurred His anger. But Jesus came and took the sin of men upon Himself and, as their Surety and their Substitute, He bore the wrath of God so that God can henceforth be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. I would like to die talking of this blessed Doctrine of Substitution and I intend, by Divine Grace, to live proclaiming it, for it is the keystone of the Gospel! Jesus Christ did literally take upon Himself the transgression and iniquity of His people and was made a curse for them, seeing that they had fallen under the wrath of God! And now every soul that believes in Jesus is saved because Jesus has taken away the penalty and the curse due to sin. In this let us rejoice!   
Christ has also saved us from the power of Satan. The Seed of the woman has bruised the serpents head so that Satans power is broken. Jesus has, by His Almighty Power, set us free from Hells horrible yoke by vanquishing the Prince of Darkness and has, moreover, saved us from the power of death, so that to Believers it shall not be death to die! Christ has saved us from sin and all its consequence by His most precious death and Resurrection   
*See God descending in the Human frame, The Offended suffering in the offenders name! All your deeds to Him imputed see,   
And all His righteousness devolved on thee.* Our Lords saving work is, in this sense, finished, but there is always going on in the world His seeking workand I want you to think of it.   
He can save us, blessed be His name! He has nothing more to do in order to save any soul that trusts Him. But we have wandered very far away, and are hidden in the wilds of the far country. We are very hungry and though there is bread enough and to spare, what is the use of it while we are lost to the home in which it is so freely distributed? We are very raggedthere is the best robe and it is ready to be put on usbut what is the good of it while we are so far away? There are the music and the dancing to make us glad and to cheer us, but what is the use of them while we still tarry among the swine? Here, then, is the great difficulty. Our Lord must find us, follow our wanderings and, treating us like lost sheep, He must bear us back upon His shoulders rejoicing!

Many need seeking because they are lost in bad company. Evil companions gather around men and keep them away from hearing the Gospel by which men are saved. There is no place to be lost in like a great city. When a man wants to escape the police, he does not run to a little villagehe hides away in a thickly populated town. So this London has many hiding places where sinners get out of the Gospels way! They lose themselves in the great crowd and are held captives by the slavish customs of the evil society into which they are absorbed. If they do but relent for a moment, some worldling plucks them by the sleeve and says, Let us be merry while we may! Why are you so melancholy? Satan carefully sets a watch upon his younger servants to prevent their escaping from his hands. These pickets labor earnestly to prevent the man from hearing the good news of salvation lest he should be converted. Sinners therefore need seeking out from among the society in which they are imbedded they need as much seeking after as the pearls of the Arabian Gulf!   
The Lord Jesus Christ, in seeking men, has to deal with deep-seated prejudices. Many refuse to hear the Gospelthey would travel many miles to escape its warning message! Some are too wise, or too rich to have the Gospel preached to them. Pity the poor rich! The poor man has many missionaries and evangelists seeking him out, but who goes after the great ones? Some come from the East to worship, but who comes from the West? Many more will find their way to Heaven out of the back slums than ever will come out of the great mansions and palaces! Jesus must seek His elect among the rich under great disadvantages, but blessed be His name, He does seek them!   
See how vices and depraved habits hold the mass of the poor classes! What a seeking out is needed among working men, for many of them are besotted with drunkenness! Look at the large part of London on the Lords-Daywhat have the working population been doing? They have been reading the Sunday newspaper and loafing about the house in their shirtsleeves and waiting at the posts of the doorsnot of wisdom, but of the drink shop! These have been thirsting, but not after righteousness. Baachus still remains the god of this city and multitudes are lost among the beer barrels and the spirit casks! In such pursuits men waste the blessed Sabbath hours. How shall they be sought out? The Lord Jesus is doing it by His Holy Spirit!   
Alas, through their ill ways, mens ears are stopped, their eyes are blinded and their hearts hardened so that the messengers of mercy have need of great patience! It would be easy work to save men if they could but be made willing to receive the Gospel, but they will not even hear it. When you do get them for a Sabbath-Day beneath the sound of a faithful ministry, how they struggle against it! They need seeking out 50 times over! You bring them right up to the Light of God and flash it upon their eyes, but they willfully and deliberately close their eyelids to it! You set before them life and death, and plead with them even unto tears that they would lay hold on eternal lifebut they choose their own delusions. So long and so patiently must they be sought that this seeking work as much reveals the gracious heart of Jesus as did the saving work which He fulfilled upon the bloody tree!   
Notice how He is daily accomplishing His search of love. Every day, Beloved, Jesus Christ is seeking mens ears. Would you believe it? He has to go about with wondrous wisdom even to get a hearing. They do not want to know the love message of their God. God so loved the worldthey know all about that and do not want to hear any more. There is an Infinite Sacrifice for sinthey turn on their heels at such stale news. They would rather read an article in an infidel Review or a paragraph in the Police News. They want to know no more of spiritual matters! The Lord Jesus, in order to get at their ears, cries aloud by many earnest voices. Thank God He has ministers yet alive who mean to be heard and will not be put off with denials! Even the din of this noisy world cannot drown their testimony. Cry aloud, my Brother! Cry aloud and spare not, for cry as you may, you will not cry too loudly, for man will not hear if he can help it. Our Lord, to win mens ears, must use a variety of voicesmusical or roughas His wisdom judges best. Sometimes He gains an audience by an odd voice whose quaintness wins attentionHe will reach men when He means to save them!   
That was an odd voicesurely the oddest I ever heard ofwhich came a little time ago in an Italian town to one of Gods elect ones there. He was so depraved that he actually fell to worshipping the devil rather than God! It chanced, one day, that a rumor went through the city that a Protestant was coming there to preach. The priest, alarmed for his religion, told the people from the altar that Protestants worshipped the devil and he charged them not to go near the meeting room. The news, as you may judge, excited no horror in the devil-worshippers mind. Yes, he thought, then I shall meet with brethren! And so he went to hear our beloved missionary who is now laboring in Rome. Nothing else would have drawn the poor wretch to hear the Good Wordbut this lie of the priests was overruled to that end! He went and heard, not of the devil, but of the devils Conquerorand before long was found at Jesus feeta sinner saved!   
I have known my Lord, when His ministers have failed, take out an arrow from His quiver and fix upon it a message, put it to His bow and shoot it right into a mans bosom till it wounded him. And as it wounded him and he lay moaning upon his bed, the message has been and accepted. I mean, that many a man in sickness has been brought to hear the message of salvation. Often, losses and crosses have brought men to Jesus feet. Jesus seeks them so. When Absalom could not get an interview with Joab, he said, Go and set his barley field on fire. Then Joab came down to Absalom and said, Why have your servants set my field on fire? The Lord sometimes sends losses of property to men who will not otherwise hear Himand at last their ears are gained! Whom He seeks, He in due time finds!   
Well, after my Lord has sought mens ears, He next seeks their desires. He will have them long for a Saviorand this is not an easy thing to accomplish! But He has a way of showing men their sinsand then they wish for mercy. He shows them at other times the great joy of the Christian lifeand then they wish to enter into the same delight. I pray that at this hour He may lead some of you to consider the danger you are in while you are yet unconverted, that so you may begin to desire Christ and in this way may be sought and found by Him!  
Then He seeks their faith. He seeks that they may come and trust Himand He has ways of bringing them to this, for He shows them the suitability of His salvation and the fullness and the freeness of it! And when He has exhibited Himself as the sinners Savior, and such a Savior as they need, then do they come and put their trust in Him. Then has He found them and saved them!   
He seeks their hearts, for it is their hearts that He has lost. And oh, how sweetly does Christ, by the Holy Spirit, win mens affection and hold them fast! I shall never forget how He won minehow first He gained my ear and then my desires, so that I wished to have Him for my Lord! And then He taught me to trust Him. And when I had trusted Him and found that I was saved, then I loved Him and I love Him still! So, dear Hearer, if Jesus Christ finds you, you will become His loving follower forever! I have been praying that He would bring this message under the notice of those whom He means to bless. I have asked Him to let me sow in good soil. I hope that among those who read these pages, there will be many whom the Lord Jesus has specially redeemed with His most precious blood and I trust that He will appear at once to them and say to each one of them, I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you. May the eternal Spirit open your ears to hear the still small voice of love! By Omnipotent Grace may you be made to yield to the Lord with the cheerful consent of your conquered will and accept that glorious Grace which will bring you to praise the seeking and saving Savior in Heaven! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JEREMIAH 31:29-37.**  
(Concluded from Sermon #3308).

29, 30. In these days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the childrens teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eats the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. God was going to deal with the Israelites individually, personallyand that is how He will deal with us.

31. Behold. Here is something worth beholdingread this great promise with tears in your eyes   
31-33. 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 you, 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. [See Ser

mons #1687, Volume 28THE LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART and #2992, Volume 52GODS WRITING UPON MANS HEARTRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It is all wills and shallsit is all Covenant life! No longer the Law engraved upon the tablets of stone, but the Law written on the heartno more the Lords command without mans power and will to obey it, but God will renew our nature and change our disposition so that we shall love to do what once we loathedand shall loathe the sins that we once loved! What a wonderful mass of mercies is included in the Covenant of Grace!

34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know MeAll your children shall be taught of the Lord. All Believers, whatever else they may not know, do know their Lordthey shall all know Me

34. From the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the LORD. How will they learn to know the Lord? Well, it will be in a very wonderful way

**34.** For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no  
more. [See Sermon #2006, Volume 34KNOWING THE LORD THROUGH PARDONED SIN Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Let me read

that again, and may some poor wandering children of God hear the promise and be glad that it applies to themI will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

35-37. Thus says the LORD, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea when the waves thereof roar. The LORD of Hosts is His name: if these ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the LORD; If Heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1960 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SERVANTS AND THE POUNDS   
NO. 1960

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 24, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants and delivered to them ten pounds,   
and said to them, Do business till I come.   
Luke 19:12, 13.**

WE are told the reason for the Saviors delivering this parable at this particular time. He was going up to Jerusalem and the ignorant and enthusiastic crowd hoped that He might now set up a temporal sovereignty. They thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear. Their minds were crowded with mistakes and the Savior would set them right upon this matter. To banish from their minds the idea of a Jewish empire in which every Hebrew would be a prince, our Lord told them this storyI use the word advisedly, for his parable was also a fact. He would show them that as yet they were not to be partakers in a kingdom, but were soon to be waiters for an absent Lord who had gone to receive a Kingdom and to return. In His absence, His disciples were to be in the position of servants put in trust with property while their Master was gone far away to receive a Kingdom and then to come again. He was now like a nobleman who may be one among many citizens, but He was going away to a court where He would be invested with royal authorityand He would come back a King. They were to be put in trust with certain pounds till He should return.

I confess I never thoroughly saw the meaning of this parable till I was directed by an eminent expositor to a passage in Josephus, which, if it is not the key of it, is a wonderfully close example of a class of facts which, no doubt, often occurred in the Roman empire in our Saviors day. Herod, you know, was king over Judea, but he was only a subordinate king under the Roman emperor. Caesar at Rome made and unmade kings at his pleasure. When Herod died, he was followed by his son, Archelaus, of whom we read in Matthews account of our Lords infancy that when Joseph heard that Archelaus was king in Judea in the place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go there. This Archelaus had no right to the throne till he obtained the sanction of Caesar and, therefore, he took a ship with certain attendants and went to Rome, which, in those days, was a far country, that he might receive the kingdom and return.

While he was on the way, his citizens, who hated him, sent an embassage after him, so has the Revised Version correctly worded itand this embassage bore this message to CaesarWe will not that this man reign over us. The messengers represented to Caesar that Archelaus was not fit to be king of the Jews. Certain of the pleadings are recorded in Josephus and they show that barristers 1,900 years ago pleaded in much the same style as their brethren of today! The people were weary of the Herods and preferred anything to their cruel rule. They even asked that Judea might become a Roman province and be joined to Syria, rather than they should remain under the hated yoke of the Idumaean tyrants. It is evident that in the case of Archelaus his citizens hated him and said, We will not have this man to reign over us. It pleased Caesar to divide the kingdom and to put Archelaus on the throne as ethnarch, or a ruler with less power than a king.

When Archelaus returned, he took fierce revenge upon those who had opposed him and rewarded his faithful adherents most liberally. This story of what had been done 30 years before would, no doubt, rise up in the recollection of the people when Jesus spoke, for Archelaus had built a palace for himself very near to Jerichoand it may be that under the walls of that palace the Savior used the event as the basis of His parable. Those who lived in our Lords day must have understood His allusions to current facts much better than we do who live 19 centuries later. The Providence of God provided that observant Jew, Josephus, to store up much valuable information for us. Read the passage in his history and you will see that even the details tally with this parable. There is the story.

The Savior, without excusing Archelaus or commending him in the least degree, simply makes his going to Rome an illustration. Here is a noble personage who is to be a king, but to obtain the throne he must journey to the distant court of a superior power. While he is going, his citizens, who hate him so, send an embassage to oppose his claims, for they will not have him for their king. However, he receives the kingdom and returns to rule it. When he does so, he rewards those who have been faithful to him and he punishes with overwhelming destruction those who have tried to prevent his reigning. There is the storylet me further interpret it.

The Savior likens Himself to a nobleman. He was here on earth a Man among men and truly a Nobleman in the midst of His fellow citizens! It was His to become king, king of all the earth! Indeed, He is such by Nature and by right, but He must first go, by death, resurrection and ascension, away to the highest courts and there, from the great Lord of All, He must receive for Himself a Kingdom. It is written, Ask of Me, and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance. And therefore Jesus must plead His claims before the King and win His suit. The day is coming when He will return, clothed with glory and honor, to take unto Himself His great power and reign, for He must reign till all enemies are put under His feet. When He comes, His enemies will be destroyed and His faithful servants will be abundantly rewarded.

Let us now draw near to this feast of Divine teaching! May the Spirit of God help us to gather practical lessons from this parable!   
I. First, I invite you to notice that THERE ARE HERE TWO SETS OF PERSONS. We see the enemies who would not have this man to reign over them and the servants who had to trade with his money. There are many divisions among men into nationalities, ranks, offices and characters, but, after all, the deep divisions will always be twothe enemies and the servants of Christ Jesus. You that are not servants, are enemies! You that are not enemies must take care that you are servants. I find no class of persons mentioned in the parable but these two and I feel certain that there are no others on the face of the earth. You are all either enemies or servants of Jesus Christ!   
Consider the enemies! The person hated was a nobleman. He was a man, but a noble man. What a Man is the Lord Jesus! Forgetting His Godhead for the moment, regard Him only as the Man, Christ Jesus, and what a Man! I need not dwell upon the nobility of His birth, of the seed of David. But I would remind you of the nobility of His Character, for that is where true nobility resides. In this respect, where is there nobility to be compared to His? Brothers, it would be difficult to find a second to the Man, Christ, within measurable distance of Himeven those who copy Him most nearly confess, regretfully, that in many things they fall short of His Glory. There was nothing petty, mean, or selfish about Jesus of Nazareth. He was altogether the noble Man!   
He deigned, for gracious purposes, to become a Citizen among others, for since we read of His being anointed above His fellows, it is implied that some were His fellows. He was a Man among men! He was of the society of carpenters! He was also free of the company of itinerant preachers. He associated with men of the sea, with men that handled the net and the oar. He went in and out among the peasantry and in His dress and style of living there was nothing to distinguish Him from the rest of the citizens. Truly, He was separate from them by His holier Character, but the separation was not caused by His unwillingness to come down to them, but by their inability to go up to Him!   
The citizens hated Him and they hated Him without cause. There is always some cause for dislike in us, but there was none in Him. In tone, or manner, or spirit, the best give some cause of offensebut in Him there was nothing which could excuse their hateit was a wanton rejection of the fittest to reign.   
As He claimed to be the King of the Jews, they especially hated His royalty, saying, We will not have this Man to reign over us. And again, We have no king but Caesar. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Yet, my Brothers and Sisters, merely regarding Jesus as a Man, if we wanted a king, He ought to be elected by the universal suffrages of mankindopenly given by uplifted hands and joyful acclamations,

Io triumphe! Mighty Conqueror, reign forever! Prince of the kings of the earth, lover of the sons of men, who did, for our sake, pour out Your precious blood, You deserve to be King of all! The most kingly of men should be king of men. Yet they hated His royal claims and this, also, without cause. Which of them had He oppressed? What revenue did He extort from the people? What Law of His was hard or cruel? In what case did He ever judge unrighteously? Yet His citizens hated Him!   
There is that same hate of Christ in the world today. Do any of you hate Him? No, you say. Yet are not some of you who do not oppose Him, treating Him with greater contempt than if you did oppose Him? You pass Him by altogether! He is not in all your thoughts! You act as if He were not worthy, even, to be opposedyou make nothing of Him! He is not among the objects for which you live. Sometimes you may speak with a partial admiration of His Character, but earnest admiration leads to imitation. If Jesus is a Savior, what worse can you do to Him than to refuse to be saved by Him? I charge you indifferent ones with being, in the core of your hearts, His worst enemies! Oh that you would repent of this and turn to Him, for He is coming again and when He comes, He will say, As for these, My enemies, slay them before My eyes. The expression is full of terror! To be slain before the eyes of injured love is doubly death! The Lord, by His Grace, deliver us from so dread a doom!   
The other set of persons in the parable were his servantsthe original would justify the translation, his bond-servants. Those who were not his enemies were his faithful servants. I suppose that the nobleman had bought them with his money, or that they had been born in his house, or that they had willingly bound themselves by indentures to him. When I said that these were only his slaves, you inwardly said, Then you that believe in Jesus are His bond-servants. Spare us not even the harsher word, slaves! We were never free till we came under bonds to Jesusand we grow in freedom as we yield to Him! Paul said, I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus, as if the hot iron of affliction had branded him with the name of Christ!   
Yes, we are the property of the Lord Jesus and not our own! We cannot, somehow, find words which will, in all their fullness express our belonging to Jesuswe wish to sink into Christ and to become as nothing for His sake. Truly He has called us friends, but we call ourselves His servants. We take a great delight in acknowledging Him as Master. like David, who said, I am Your servant, and then again, I am Your servant, and then again, and the son of Your handmaid. He was born a servant, born of a mother who was also, herself, a servant. After all this, he added, You have loosed my bonds. Servitude to Christ is perfect freedom and, in every respect, we have found it so! We never expect to know perfect freedom until He has brought every thought, every conception, imagination and desire into captivity to Himself! We have been bought with His money and we cost Him dearly. We have also been born in His house by a second birth and we are bound to Him by indentures which we have gladly signed and sealedand are ready to sign and seal again   
*High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,   
That vow renewed shall daily hear!   
Till in lifes latest hour we bow,   
And bless in death a bond so dear.*  
Thus we are truly on the opposite side of His enemies, for we are willingly His servants!   
I have thus introduced to you the two classes. Before we go any further, may the Holy Spirit operate upon us to make us discern to which of these two we belong! If we are enemies, may we become servants from this time forth!   
II. We now advance a step further and notice THE ENGAGEMENTS OF THESE SERVANTS. Their lord was going away and he left his 10 servants in charge with a little capital with which they were to do business, or trade for him till he returned. He did not tell them how long he would be away, perhaps he did not know, himselfI mean the king in the story but even our Master says, Of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of Heaven. I am going away, the nobleman said, you are my servants and I leave you as my servants in the midst of my enemies. Be loyal to me and, to prove your faithfulness, continue to trade in my name. I shall entrust to each of you a very small sum of money, but it will keep you occupied and your trading on my account will be your daily acknowledgment that you are loyal to me, whatever others may be.   
Notice, first, that this was honorable work. They were not entrusted with large funds, but the amount was enough to serve as a test. It put them upon their honor. If they were really attached to their master, they would feel that he had placed a confidence in them which they must justify. Slaves are not always to be entrusted with money. In fact, the tendency of bondage has always been to take away from men the quality of trustworthinessour bondage to Christ has the opposite effect because it is no bondage at all! These servants of the master were treated in some respect as partners, they were to have fellowship with him in his property. They were his confidants and trustees. His eyes were not watching them, for he had gone into a far country and he trusted them to be a law unto themselves. They were not to render a daily account, but to be left alone until he returned.   
Now that is just how the Master has treated us! He has put us in trust with the Gospel and He relies upon our honor. He does not call us at once to an audit, for He is not here. I do not think that systems of Church government which involve a measure of the spy system are at all after our Lords mind. If Christians are what they ought to be, they can be trustedthey are a law unto themselves. The Lord puts you not under certain rules and regulations so as to ordain that you shall give a tenth, though I wish you did give that much at least. He does not say, You shall subscribe so much at such a time and work in such a way. Noyou are not under Law, but under Grace. If you love your Master, you will soon discover what to do for Him and you will do it with delight!   
The nobleman does not lay down rigid rules and order that at such an hour in the morning the servants must begin workand that they must work on for so many hours. No. He says, Take my pound and trade with it. Our version, Do business till I come, is a lumbering Latin way of saying, Trade with it till I come. And our Lord has put us on the same footing of confidence, appealing to our honor and love. He will not come and look after us today or tomorrow, though He will ultimately have a strict reckoning with us. Meanwhile He has gone, but He has left us here in the midst of His enemiesto show His enemies that He has some friends and that He must be a good Master since even those who acknowledge themselves to be His vassals, rejoice to spend their whole lives in His service!   
It was work for which the nobleman gave them capital. He gave to each of them a pound. Not much, you will say. No, he did not intend it to be much. They were not capable of managing very much. If he found them faithful in a very little, he could then raise them to a higher responsibility. I do not read that any of them complained of the smallness of his capital, or wished to have it doubled.   
Brothers and Sisters, we need not ask for more talentswe have quite as many as we shall be able to answer for. Preachers need not seek for larger sphereslet them be faithful in those which they now occupy. A Brother recently said to me, I cannot do much with a hundred hearers, and I replied, You will find it hard work to give in a good account for even a hundred people. I confess it very quietly, but I have often wished that I had a little congregation, that I might watch over every soul in it. But now I am doomed to an everlasting dissatisfaction with my work, for what am I among so many? I can only feel that I have not even begun to do the hundredth part of what needs to be done in such a Church as this!   
Each one had a pound in his hand and his lord only said, Do business till I come. He did not expect them to do a wholesale business on so small a stock, but they were to trade as the market would allow. He did not expect them to make more than the pound would fairly bring in, for, after all, he was not an austere man. Take that pound, he said, and do your best. I know the times are bad, for you have to trade among enemies. You could not, perhaps, manage to put out 20 pounds under such circumstances, but you can turn over a pound and use every shilling of it. Thus he gave them a sufficient capital for his purpose.   
My friend, have you that pound anywhere about you? Alas, says one, I have no abilities at all. How is that? Your Lord gave you a poundwhat has become of it? You are one of His servants and if you are doing nothing, you are in an evil case and ought to be ashamed. What have you done with that pound? Put your hand in your pocket. It is not there. Is it in the napkin?that napkin with which you ought to have wiped the sweat of labor from your brow? Have you got that pound? You say, It is not much. The Master did not say it was much, on the contrary, He called it, very little. But have you used that very little? This should go home to your consciences! You have been treated as confidential servants and yet you are not true to your Lord. Why is this?   
What they had to do with the pound was prescribed in general terms. They were to trade with it, not to play with it. I dare say they were inclined to argue, Our masters cause is assailed, let us fight for him, yet he did not say, fight, but trade! Peter drew his sword. Oh, yes, we are eager combatants, but slow merchants! Many manifest a defiant spirit and are never more satisfied than when they are in noise and strife. The servants in this parable were not to fight, but to trade, which is a much more coolblooded and ignoble thing in common esteem. We may leave our Lords enemies to HimselfHe will end their rebellions one of these days. We are to follow a much lowlier line of things.

No doubt certain of them might have thought that the pound would be useful to purchase them comforts, or even luxuriesone would buy a new coat and another would bring home a piece of furniture for his house and others would solemnly say, We have our families to think of. Yes, but their lord did not say so! The master said, Do business till I come. They were neither to fight with it, nor hoard it, nor spend it, nor waste it, but to trade with it for him. The pound was not put into their hands for display. They were not to glory over others who had not so much as a penny to bless themselves with, for though they were little capitalists, that capital was their lords!   
It is a pity when Graces or talents are boasted of as if they were our own. A tradesman who is prospering seldom has much money to showit is all needed in his business. Sometimes he can scarcely put his hand upon a five-pound note because his cash is all absorbedhis golden grain is all sown in the field of his trade. Speaking for myself, I cannot find any room for glorying in myself, for if I have either Grace or strength, I certainly have none to spare! I have barely enough for the work in hand and not enough for the service in prospect. Our pound is not to be hung on our watch-chain, but to be traded with!   
Trading represents a life which may be called commonplace, but it is eminently practicaland it has an exceedingly practical effect upon the person engaged in it. This is owing in part to the fact that it is an occupation in which there is great scope for judgment. They were not tied down to a special kind of trade. The man who made his one pound into 10 chose the best form of business. He sought not that which was most pleasant, but that which was most profitable. So you are left, dear Friends, to choose your own line of service for your Masteronly you must trade for Him and for Him everything must be done well. At the present time no trading pays better than the mission to the Congo, or to the hill-tribes of Indialarge dividends come, also, from dealings with the poorest of the poor in the slums and as much from widows and orphans who are in extreme destitution. When men have to lay down their lives for the Lord Jesus, after a life languished away with fever, the returns are amazing! Where the need is greatest, our Lord receives most glory. It is left to you to judge what you can do, how you can do it and where you will do it. Do that which will most surely win souls and that which will best establish your Lords Kingdom. Exercise your very best judgment and get into that line of holy service in which you can bring in the largest revenue for your glorious Master.   
The work which the nobleman prescribed was one that would bring them out. The man who never succeeds in trade, do you know him? I know him. He complains that he has a small head and usually the complaint is founded on fact. He needs to follow a business in which the bread and butter will be brought to his door ready spread and even then, unless it is cut up into dice pieces on his plate, he will get no breakfast. The man that is to succeed in trade in these times must have confidence, look alive, keep his eyes open and be all there. Our times are hard, but not so hard as those described in the parable when the faithful servants were trading in the midst of traitorsthey had need of sharp wits. Trade develops a mans perseverance, patience and courage. It tests honesty, truthfulness and firmness. It is a singularly excellent discipline for character.   
When this nobleman gave his servant the pound, it was that the servant might see what stuff he was made of. Trade with small capital means personal work and drudgery, long hours and few holidaysplenty of disappointment and small gains. It means working with might and main and doing the thing with all your heart and mind. In such a manner are we to serve Christ. The word, trade, has a world of meaning in it. I cannot bring it out this morning, but there is no need, for the most of you know more about trade than I do and you can instruct yourselves. You are to trade for the Lord Jesus Christ in a higher and yet more emphatic sense than that in which you have traded for yourselves. With your physical strength, your mental faculties, your substance, your familywith everythingyou are to bring glory to God and honor to the name of Jesus! It is to be your life-business to work for Jesus and with Jesus.  
Trading, if it is successfully carried on, is an engrossing concern, calling out the whole man. It is a continuous toil, a varied trial, a remarkable test, a valuable disciplineand this is why the nobleman put his bondsmen to it, that he might afterwards use them in still higher service. Brothers and Sisters, learn what is meant by trading and then carry on a spiritual trade with all your heart.   
At the same time, let us notice that it was work suitable to their capacity. Small as the capital was, it was enough for them, for they were no more than bondsmen, not of a high grade of rank or education. Their master gave them only a pound, which did not mean more than £3 10s of our money. One could not get a large shop, or even a decent stock with that small amount. They could not complain that they were placed in a business which was too heavy for them to manage. They could, any of them, buy a few goods and hawk them. The Lord Jesus Christ does not ask you to do more than you can do. He does not break you down with cares beyond your capacity. We have not yet reached the limit of our powerswe can yet do more. Jesus is no exacting master. It is only a false and lying servant who will call Him an austere Man, reaping where He has not sowed. Nothing of the kind! He has given us a light business our work for Him is suited to our limited powers and He is ready, by His Holy Spirit, to assist us. Let us use well our single pound. Let it be our ambition to make 10 of it, at the very least, and may the Lord graciously prosper our endeavors, that we may have large interest to present to Him when He shall come!   
Did you enquire as to how these men were to be supported? Their master did not tell them to live off his pound. No, they were his servants and so they lived under his roofand he provided for all their needs. He had gone on a journey, but his establishment was not given upthe table was still spread and the children and the servants had bread enough and to spare. Oh, says one, that alters the case! Just so, but it does not make it different from yours, or, if it does, I am sorry for you. Are you your own provider? Do you cry, What shall I eat? What shall I drink? Do you not know that all these things do the nations of the earth seek after? Whereas Jesus says, Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. As I understand my life, I am to do my Lords work and He is to provide for me. He may do this through my own industry, but still it is His work to do itnot mine! If the Providence of God is not sufficient to provide for us, then I am sure we cannot provide for ourselves! And if it is sufficient, we shall be wise to cast all our care on the Lord and live undividedly for His praise! Remember that text, Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. You, as a servant, are not to be entangled with carking cares about your own interests, but you are to give your whole thought and life to your Masters service. He will take care of you, now, and reward you when He shall come.   
III. Thirdly, to understand this parable, we must remember THE EXPECTANCY WHICH WAS ALWAYS TO INFLUENCE THEM. They were left as trusted servants till he should return, but that return was a main item in the matter.   
They were to believe that he would return and that he would return a king. The citizens did not believe it. They hoped that Caesar would refuse him the throne, but we are to be sure that our noble Master will receive the Kingdom. This rebel world does not believe that Jesus will ever be King. The other day we read of the Eclipse of Christianity. Constantly we see His dominion assailed. They say that it is practically disproved by facts. Is it? Sirs, excuse me, I am desperately prejudiced, for I am His servant! I owe Him my life, my all! I am persuaded that He is and must be King of kings! I know Him so well that I am sure that He will prevail at the court to which He has gone. He is in very high favor there. The last time I saw the face of the great King, I obtained that favor through the use of His name. I receive anything I ask for when I mention His name and so I am sure that He is in wonderful high repute above. Why, His Father is the Sovereign! I am sure He will not deny the kingdom to His only-begotten Son! Jesus will come in His KingdomI am sure of it! Let us work in the full conviction that our absent Lord will soon be here, again, with a glorious diadem upon His brow. When He went away, He took with Him the scars of one who died a felons deathand He will come again with them, but the nail prints will be no memorials of His shamethey will be as jewels to His hands!  
The noblemans servants were to regard their absent master as already king and they were so to trade among his enemies that they should never compromise their own loyalty. They were of the kings party and of no other. It is a very awkward position to be into trade among people that are enemies to your king! You need, in such a case, to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. This is precisely our position! We have to bring glory to God out of men who hate Him! We have to magnify our Lord among men who would, if they could, crucify Him again! We have to go in and out among them in such a manner that they can never say that we side with them in their rebellion, or wink at their disloyalty! We cannot be, Hail fellow: well met! with those whose life is a practical insult to the crown rights of King Jesus! We must, above all things, prove ourselves loyal to our absent Lord lest He appoint us our portion among His enemies.

I find that the original would suggest to anyone carefully reading it, that they were to regard their master as already returning. This should be our view of our Lords AdventHe is even now on His way here! No sooner had He risen from the grave than, practically, our Lord was coming back! Strange paradox! But His ascension into Heaven was, in a certain sense, part of His coming back to us, for the way for Him, from the Cross on earth to the crown of the whole earth, was via the New Jerusalem. He is coming, now, as fast as Wisdom judges it to be right. I am sure our Savior will not delay a moment beyond what is absolutely necessary, for He loves the Church which is His brideand as her Bridegroom, He will not delay the long-expected hour of their meetingnever to part again. He is readyit is the bride that needs to make herself ready! Jesus desires to come! His heart is responsive to our cry when we say, Come quickly! He will come sooner than we think. We are bound to feel that He is, at this moment, on the road, and we are to live as if He might arrive at any moment!   
We must trade on till our Lord has come. There must be no retiring from His business, even if we retire from our own. There must be no ceasing because we fancy we have done enough. Our rest will be when He comes! But till then, we must trade on.   
Let us labor as in His actual Presence. How would you act with Jesus at your elbow? Act just so. He sees us as clearly as if His bodily Presence were in our midst. Be awakened and inspired by the Redeemers eyes. Thus will you live in this trial state after the best possible manner.   
IV. Now comes the sweet part of the subject. Note well THE SECRET DESIGN OF THE LORD. Did it ever strike you that this nobleman had a very kindly design towards his servants? Did this nobleman give these men one pound each with the sole design that they should make money for him? It would be absurd to think so! A few pounds would be no item to one who was made a king. No, no! It was as Mr. Bruce says, He was not money-making, but character-making. His design was not to gain by them, but to educate them!   
First, their being entrusted with a pound each was a test. This nobleman said to himself, When I am a king, I must have faithful servants in power around me. My going away gives me an opportunity of seeing what my servants are made of. I shall thus test their capacity and their industry, their honesty and their zeal. If they prove faithful over a few things, they will be fit to be trusted with greater matters. The test was only a pound and they could not make much mischief out of that, but it would be quite sufficient to try their capacity and fidelity, for he that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful, also, in much. They did not all endure the test, but by its means he revealed their characters.   
It was also a preparation of them for future service. He would lift them up from being servants to become rulers! They were, therefore, to be put in a place of measurable responsibility and to be made men of thereby. They were to be rulers over a very littlesay a pound and that which came of itand this would be an education for them. In the process of trading, they would be in training to rule. The best way to learn to be a master is to be first a servant! And the reason why some masters are hard and tyrannical is because they do not know the heart of a servant by experience. They know nothing of service and so they have not the wisdom, the generosity and the tenderness which masters should show towards servants. So this nobleman was wisehe was at the same time testing and training his men.   
Besides this, I think he was giving them a little anticipation of their future honors. He was about to make them rulers over cities and so he first made them rulers over pounds. They had been servants and taken orders from him every morning, but now they have no master to go to and must use their own discretion. They were, in effect, in a small sphere, made into little kings. In all that country the citizens had rebelled, but there was a little kingdom of the noblemans own servantsand these obeyed him and did their best to maintain his interest in their little way. They were already made free, placed in a measure of authority and made to know the sweets and the burdens of personal responsibility.   
Oh, you who work for God, when you are overseers of others for Him when you win souls for Him and when you conquer adversaries in His nameyou are already anticipating your eternal reward! We are fashioning our future position upon the anvil of our lives, for Heaven, though it is a state and a place prepared for us by the Lord Jesus, lies also mainly in character. The man is more the source of joy than the streets of gold in which he will walk. If you hide your pound and neglect your Masters service here, you are making for yourselves a dim and hazy future in that grand millennial reign of His! You that addict yourselves to your holy trade and consecrate yourselves entirely to your Lord shall have large honors when He comes to reign gloriously among His ancients!   
For see, when the nobleman came to the man who had earned 10 pounds, he gave him 10 cities. Think of that! There is no proportion between the poor service and the rich reward! A pound is rewarded with a city! Their master was not bound to pay them anythingthey were his bond-servants but what he gave them was of his overflowing generosity! I do not think that he who brought five pounds was in the least blamed. He may have been just as diligent as the other, but he had less capacity. But how he must have opened his eyes when his master gave him five cities! Perhaps he wondered more than the first. Fancy if any one of us had been put to trade with a pound upon commission and had received five cities for reward! The money earned would not buy the smallest house and yet it brings in to the worker five cities! What surprise filled the heart of the recipient of such bounty! It never entered into his heart to envy the brother who had 10 cities, for the five were so vast a recompense. He must have been carried away with rapture with the prospect before him!   
Though there may be degrees of glory, the only difference will be in the capacity of the blessed to contain it. All the vessels will be full, but they will not be all equally largethe man of the 10 pounds will simply be a larger vessel, full to the brimthe man with the five will be less capacious, but quite as full, to his own glad amazement and joyful bewilderment! However, let us go in for winning the 10 pounds if we can! For our Lords sake, let us trade in spiritual things with all our hearts.   
But, says one, where and what will these cities be? It may be that all this will literally happen during the millennial period, but I do not know. When Christ shall come, the dead in Christ will rise first and we read that, the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. There may be space during that era for all the special rewards of the Gospel dispensation. It may also be, but I do not know, and so I cannot tell you, that we are, in future dispensations, to fill unto other worlds much the same office as angels fill to ours. Jesus has made us kings and priestsand we are in training for our thrones. What if in this congregation I am learning to proclaim my Masters Glory to myriads of worlds! Possibly the preacher who is faithful here may yet be made to tell forth His Lords Glory to constellations at a later time. What if one might stand upon a central star and preach Christ to worlds on worlds instead of preaching Him to these two galleries and to this area! Why not?   
At any rate, if I should ever gain a voice loud enough to be heard for millions of miles, I would speak none other than those glorious Truths of God which the Lord has revealed in Christ Jesus! If we are faithful here, we may expect our Master to entrust us with higher service hereafter! Only let us see to it that we are able to endure the test and that we profit by the training. As our account comes out in the very little, so will it be with us on the grand scale of eternity. This puts another face upon the work of this lower sphere. Rulers over 10 cities! Rulers over five cities! Brothers and Sisters, you are not fit for such dignities if you cannot serve your Lord well in this world with the little He has entrusted to you. If you live wholly to Him here, you will be prepared for the glories unspeakable which await all consecrated souls. Let us go in for a devoted life at once! Time is so short and the things we deal with are comparatively so small! We are soon coming out of the eggshell of timeand when we break loose into eternity and see the vastness of the Divine purposes, we shall be altogether amazed at the service bestowedwhich will be the reward of service done. O Lord, make us faithful! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 19:1-38.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK347, 856. 342.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3545 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

OUR GLORIOUS LEADER   
NO. 3545

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1917.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS DAY EVENING, JANUARY 4, 1872.

**And when He had thus spoken, He went on   
ahead, ascending up to Jerusalem.   
Luke 19:28.**

A VERY beautiful spectacle it is to see the Lord Jesus marching in front and His followers eagerly following on behind. They were going up to Jerusalem, where it is true, He would receive some honor, but also where He would be betrayed into the hands of cruel men and put to a shameful deathbut He went on ahead of them. As the shepherd goes before the sheep, not driving, but leading. As the captain goes before his soldiers as taking the post of danger, so our Lord went on before them. It was far better that He should go first than that they should, for the disciple is never more out of place than when he outruns his Master. If he will follow his Masters commands, he shall do well. But if he shall follow his own devices and invent his own way, he shall do badly. The pilgrimage behind the cloud is a safe one, but a rush before the cloud will end in a disaster. The Master must go first, not the disciple. But then, when the Master advances, it is right to see the disciple follow, ready of foot, quick at his Masters heel, delighted with his Masters company. One likes to think of that journey up to Jerusalem, with Jesus Christ just a little ahead in the front, and His disciples closely following Him. I thought it was a picture that might serve us as a model throughout the whole year. I am not going to talk to you long at this time, but wish just to sketch that picture before your minds eyes and say, So be it unto each one of us. May Jesus be with us. May Jesus lead the way. And may His own Divine Spirit give us Grace to follow Himnot like Peter, afar offbut as loving disciples who keep closely under their Masters guidance! From the beginning of the year to the end of the year may we rejoice to feel that He goes ahead of us, but may we also, with cheerful willingness, follow close behind! I present it to you, I say, as the picture for this New Year of Grace, and may it be verified in your experience.

Very simply, then, I shall try to call attention to the blessed fact that Jesus goes ahead of us and, having done so, I shall ask you, in the second place, to seek after a sweet sensation of this Truth of God. And the first Truth, then, to consider is

I. THE BLESSED FACTHe went ahead of them.   
We have already said that He was going the way of suffering. He was going up to Jerusalem to suffer. When you are in the way of suffering, He will go before you. He was always in the way of service. There was more to be done at Jerusalem before He had finished His course. May we, in the way of service, always find Him going before us. And He was also, in the third place, on the way to deathand if we have any fears about our passage through the river, may this console usHe went before us!

To begin, then, at the beginning, here is the blessed fact that Christ has gone ahead of us in the way of suffering. He has done so by His own actual experience while He was here in the flesh. He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. In all our afflictions He was afflicted. He Himself took our sicknesses and carried our sorrows. Rest assured that in whatever way of suffering you have to go in consequence of your being a child of man, and especially in consequence of your being a child of God, you will find that Christ has gone that way ahead of you! Are you full of bodily pain, stretched upon the bed? Are you apt to think that none ever suffered as you do? He suffered more than you! He went ahead of you along that flinty pathway. The pangs of His death must have been extreme. And remember His Passion in the Garden, His agony in Gethsemane. You have not in this matter yet come to having drops of blood oozing in sweat from your countenance. No, He has gone ahead of you there. In all the pangs of your bodily frame, Jesus has preceded you. Read the 22nd Psalm, with all its wonderful expressionsI am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint. You have brought Me into the dust of death. He knew the fever and its thirst upon the Cross when He was dying there. He said, You have brought Me to the dust of death. You have not one suffering that may be imagined to be more exquisite than what He endured! Your griefs are molehills compared with the Alps of His sufferings!

But you will say that it is not exactly the pathway of personal bodily pain you are traversing, but you have endured much in the sufferings of others you have lost. You have had half your heart, perhaps, taken away at one time. Friend after friend has been carried to the tomb! But He went ahead of you in this pathway, also. Did you never read where it is written, Jesus wept? Behold how He loved him, said the Jews, as they beheld Him at the sepulcher of the most-beloved Lazarus. He knows what bereavements means as well as youHe has ahead of you. Ah you say, but in consequence of the bereavement I have suffered, I am left a widow. How shall I be provided for? In addition to the woe of the loss, I have to look forward to the future! Will these hands be able to find me daily bread? My garments may become, by degrees, more and more thin and time-worn. I fear cold, nakedness and hunger. And suppose it should come to that, as it will not, I trust, yet He went ahead of you! You are not so poor as He. Hear His voice tonight, Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head. To pay the common tax, He must borrow money from the fish of the sea. His garment was the common seamless robe of peasants. He was but poorly cladHe was in all respects the child of poverty. First cradled in a manger, and then laid for His last sleep in a borrowed grave, for still He had not where to lay His head. In the sleep of death, Jesus went ahead of you! O son of poverty, O daughter of need, you may see the print of His footsteps all along that thorny way!

Yes, says one, but still there is added to poverty in my case the fact that I have been forsaken by friends, and I am very fearful that even those who stood somewhat faithful to me will soon grow weary, and I shall be left alone. And did you never hear Him say, And I shall be left alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me? And have you never read how they all forsook Him and fled, and Peter denied Him with oaths and curses and, worst of all, Judas, who had been trusted with His little stock, sold Him for the price of a slave? He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me. Ingratitude most cruel, treachery most base! Your Lord has suffered it! You may see the prints of His pierced feet along that pathway if you will but look for them. Jesus went ahead of you in actual suffering. And what if you have been serving your Lord with zeal and fervor, and you have been reproached, even by those who love Him? You have met with the cold shoulder where you expected to find encouragement. If your motives have been misrepresented by the very persons who ought to have supported you in your ardor, ah, what then? Was not He also a reproach among His mothers brethren? When His zeal had eaten Him up, they said that He was madand even His mother and His brethren stood outside desiring that they might see Him because they thought Him bereaved of His wits! And if the wicked world has reproached you, did they not call the Master of the house, Beelzebub? Shall they have soft names and honorable titles for the men of His household? If they said of Him, He has a devil, and is mad, why listen to Him? do you think they will say great and flattering things of you? O you that are made ashamed for His sake, and made a spectacle unto men and unto angels, be not afraid! No strange thing has happened to you! Thousands of saints have passed along this road and, chief of all, your Master, Christ, has gone ahead of you! In the path of suffering, then, Jesus has gone ahead of us from the fact of having actually and literally experienced what we suffer!

He has gone before in another sense, namely, that now, though He reigns exalted high in the highest heavens, He still goes ahead of us in the intense sympathy of His sacred heart. Jesus is not separated from His people by the mere fact of distance. Lo, He has said, I am with you always, even to the end of the world, and you know what mysterious, yet real union exists between Christ, the Head, and all His members. It came out clearly in the case of Paul, when Jesus said to Him, Why do you persecute Me? He was persecuting only a few poor people in Jerusalem, or in Damascus, whom he despised, but Christ said, Why do you persecute Me? because persecuting the saints was persecuting Christ! Christ suffering in His members. Christ suffering on the Cross was the Head suffering, but when His people were torn to pieces in the amphitheatre, when they were burned tat Smithfield, and when, today, they are hooted and made a jest of, it is Christ sufferingstill suffering in His members and when any child of God suffers in any righteous cause, whenever affliction comes upon a saint in any form, Christ sympathizes with him. Rest assured

*In every pang that rends the heart,*

*The Man of Sorrows bears His part.*   
In all their affliction He was afflicted. A finger never suffers without the brain participatingand no humble member of the true Church of Christ ever suffers without Christ, the glorious Head, suffering in sympathy therewith.

Now this is very cheering to those who have faith to receive it, because very much of the heart-breaking that comes into the world is from a sense of loneliness. When men feel that somebody sympathizes with them. When those who are being beaten feel that others smart as they do, then they take courage. Oh, there is One who loves you more than you can love yourself, who sympathizes with you, you suffering saint, from the Throne of His Glory! Be you, therefore, glad! Be of good courage and let this comfort your heart!

There is a third way in which Christ goes ahead of us in the path of sufferingthat is, in the matter of Providence. While He has Himself suffered, and sympathizes, in a third respect He always goes ahead of us in our sufferings, in preparing them for us, and preparing us for them. Our Lord has gone to Heaven to prepare a place for usand I believe He has prepared all the road as well as a place at the end of it. You shall find, O child of God, when you come into the deep waters, that Christ is there there by His Grace and Spirit, and there, also, by His Providence, to take care of you. It was appointed that Jacob and his tribes should all go down to Egypt. To Egypt they must go, but Joseph went down there before them and became lord over all Egyptnot for his own sake, but for the sake of his brothers, for all the wealth of Egypt shall be used, if necessary, in order that Jacob and all his household shall be preserved during the time of famine! Now if there is an Egypt to which you are to go, Jesus, your Joseph, has gone before you to make it ready for you, to find you a Goshen and to nourish you there till such day as you shall come from it. God, even your Savior, Jesus, leads the van! As the cloud, like a mighty banner of fire, went through all the mazes of the winding way of Israel over the desert, so Jesus marches before us, the Leader, the Standard-Bearer among ten thousand, always in the front and with His eternal power and Godhead making straight the pathway for His peoples feet! Let us be of good courage, then, in this respect. In the matter of suffering, He went ahead of you.   
But now realize here the retrospect. If He goes ahead of you, then follow Him. You love not suffering. It were not suffering if you did love it, but still, if Jesus leads, look not to the way. It were better that that way should be full of thorns and briars which would tear your flesh, and Christ be with you, than that it should be a long green pathway, and your Shepherd lead you not! Go on! He went to His sufferings without a murmur. Moreover, even His flesh shrank and, at last, He said, Not My will, but Yours be done. Say you, the same. Dot you fear as you enter into the cloud? Within that cloud shall be the secret tabernacle of the Most High, wherein He will reveal Himself to you as He never did before! Some of us owe much to the anvil and the hammer, and the fire, much to suffering, much to trialsand we thank God we had them! And you will yet have to do the same, but, oh, stay not back! Remember, after all, a lack of resignation will not assist you in your suffering, but, on the contrary, nothing makes suffering so light as resignation to itand a perfect acquiescence in the Divine Will does much to take away the gall from the cup! You must go where Jesus leadsgo, therefore, willingly, cheerfully, trustingly and even joyfully, for it is a triumph to a Christian to bear the cross after Jesusand to be crucified and buried with Him were a high honor to any child of God. Go on, then, for Christ leads the way!

But now I must not tarry so long on that part, but I observe it is said Christ leads the way in service as well as in suffering. He was going up to Jerusalem to accomplish the rest of His life-work before He surrendered His Spirit to His Father. Now you and I, and each of us, have a service to perform. We were redeemed and with a price that we might serve the Lord. We are a royal priesthood, a peculiar people. We have a priesthood to fulfill. All Gods children, all Gods servants are priest and kings, and they have a rule to discharge, and a priesthood to fulfill. Now we are beginning a new year of service. It will be a very sweet thing to us if we can know that Jesus Christ has gone ahead of us in the path of service. Beloved, I might take the same Truth of God and say that He has actually gone before us in having fulfilled the same service. If there is any good thing for you to do, Christ has done it before you! Are we called to preach the Gospel? You know how He was anointed to preach glad tidings to the poor. Are you called to teach the little ones? Did not He say, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven? Have you to feed the hungry? On what a large scale did He do it! Have you to visit the sick and to minister to their needs? Oh, how many thousands owed their opened eyes or restored limbs to Him! Christs life anticipates all the service of the Church. One might very easily, in taking the life of Christ, find all the operations of a truly active Church prefigured thereall of them. There is nothing new under the sun, and when a man has found something, and thought, Here is something that is fresh, you shall find Christ has looked after the halt, the blind and the lame before youand if you seek to raise the fallen woman, you will be made to remember Him who said, Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more. I should be afraid to undertake any service in which I could not see that He has gone before. What Christ has done, it is right for us to do, save only in that work of Expiation where we cannot help Him. There He treads the winepress alone, and of the people there is none with Himbut in all in which He is our Exemplar, it is always a safe thing for us to follow very closelyand we shall find that He has gone before us!

And truly He goes before us in all our works by His Holy Spirit actively proving His Divine sympathy still with us. I do not look upon the Church of God as so many pious men and women at work by themselves, but I see God working by them, working in them, working through them! They are the workers to the eye, but no further. It is God who works in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure! If Satan saw in the work only the man, he would laugh at him, but he perceives the hand of Joab is therea mightier hand than the hand of man and, therefore, it is that he is often put to the rout. O you that speak for Jesus, that pray for Jesus, that give to His cause and work for His name, let this be your joy and your comfortthat Jesus Christ is with you and goes ahead of you in all this service!

And so He does in His Providence. If we had but eyes to see it, and could know all things, we would perceive that when we come to preach the Gospel, God has been preparing mens hearts to receive it. Many a time a man will come up to the House of Prayer, and he has a trouble that has been plowing up and down, and the minister has got a handful of seed to sow, which the birds would have devoured if they had fallen on hard soilonly God has plowed the man and made him like soil, ready to receive it! He has gone ahead of us! If ever I see these benches full, I feel a little distressed, and yet elated, because I always reckon that I have got a picked congregation and each man is sent with a design. Though there may not be salvation in every case, yet there are some to whom God will bless the Word, to which the Word will be fitted to the very letter, for God will guide the preacher and oftentimes as much reveals Himself from the pulpit as ever a Nebuchadnezzars dream was revealed again by Daniel when it was gone altogether from his mind. You shall be sure that God is in the Word if it comes home to you in that way! And if you are a Christian worker, you may expect that the Providence of God will prepare mens hearts for that work which you are trying to do!

I would that the Church of God would now recollect that assuredly God is going ahead of her in all her service at this moment. The world is prepared for the Gospel if we were but willing to present the Gospel to the world! When our Lord Christ came into this world there was a universal peace, and the peace of the public mind and the state of the public pulse was just suitable for the preaching of the Gospel by the Lord and by His Apostlesand there is some such suitability as that now. Chains that long have galled unhappy nations have been filed through. The people that sat in darkness have seen a great lightthey have demanded liberty and won it with a good right handand mean to hold it! And now is the time when the darkness flies and light comes for those who have the still brighter light of the everlasting Gospel of the ever blessed God to spring into the gap and proclaim salvation by a Crucified Redeemer to all the sons of men! Up, Churches of London, and to your work! Even now the very demand for education among you, and the stir that there is among the people, the breaking up of hoary systems of abomination, the motion and commotionall this means good to you! You have been embedded in the ice and frozen up these long wintry days, but, lo, the sun has risen and the long summer days shall soon come and your boat shall be freighted and put out to seaand bring a blessed cargo of souls home to God their Father! Let us be up and doing, for Jesus goes ahead of us in the matter of Providence. May He help us to keep always near Him. What He would have us do, oh, may we do it! Word for word what He would have us speak, thought for thought what He would have us think, act for act what He would have us do! Let us never have a glorious Leader and be a laggard people. Oh, for the Grace that is in Him to bedew us plenteously, that as He goes ahead of us we may follow Him in the path of service!

Now very briefly upon one other point, which was the path of death. Our Lord was going to Golgotha, and there was to be, as far as this world was concerned, the end of His journey. To the Cross He must be nailed, and in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the Lord Jesus must sleep. Death is not a pleasant thing. It matters not how you gild the pill, it is a pill. If the Lord comes not, however, before that time we shall have to pass through death, and we shall find it, if we are His people, to be infinitely less painful than the fear of death! We feel a thousand deaths in fearing one, and if our faith were greater, we would have no fear of death. Ah, says one, what I dread is parting, leaving my friends. He went before themHe parted from them all, and from His mother. And He said to John, Behold, your mother, and to His mother, Woman, behold your son, as the light faded from His eyes. He went ahead of us in the path of death. Ah, but I cannot bear to think of the pain of dying, says one. You will never have such pain as His in deathHe went ahead of you. He had a sense of sin in dying. He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree, but no curse can ever light on you, Believer. The blessing is yours because the curse was His! Oh, He has gone ahead of youHe has gone where you shall never go, for He suffered the wrath of God, which you never shall suffer, for that wrath is gone and passed away forever! There are none of the surroundings of a dying bed which can suggest such horror as that which surrounded the death of our Lordso that He has gone ahead of you in everything that might alarm you in the prospect of your departure. He has gone ahead of you. Be content to follow Him to the grave. It is no more

*A charnel-house of sense,   
Relics of lost innocence,   
The place of ruin and decay;   
The imprisoning stone is rolled away.*

It is now a nest of sweetness since Jesus laid in it. The grave is no longer unfurnishedthere are His grave clothes left for you and, moreover, the stone being rolled away, you have the promise that you shall come out of it again! When the trumpet of the archangel sounds, those poor bones shall arise and the body that was sown in weakness shall be raised in power! What joy it is, then, to think that He went ahead of us and how obediently, no, triumphantly, may we follow Him, even to death itself! Here, then, is the blessed fact, in suffering, or service, or departure, Christ goes ahead of us! Now the point we close with is this

II. MAY WE, ALL OF US, HAVE A SWEET REALIZATION OF THIS TRUTH DURING THIS YEAR.   
We believe a good deal of Doctrine which we have never yet realized. We know much to be food which we have never fed upon. Many Christians are like those who have sacks of flour in the house, but no bread. They have nothing available for present food. Some are like rich men that may happen to be abroad with thousands in gold, but no small silver, no spending money. May you be able to coin the bullion of precious promise so as to use it in the journey of life. May you make practical application of precious Truths of God, tasting the honey, drinking the wine and being satisfied with them. Now, then, to realize that Christ goes ahead of us is to realize that we are never alone. If I am in my study, and a problem staggers me, I am not alonemy Lord will teach me. You are in your little chamber with the needle, working hard for very scanty pay. You have to sufferyou have not got to suffer that alone. I am with you when you pass through the fire; you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. But you have got to go into the workroom and there are those that point at you, and they have a jest for you, whom they know to be a follower of Christ. You have not to bear that alone! He has the heaviest end of that cross and He is persecuted in His persecuted members. But you are busy in business, and your cares afflict you. Blessed be God you have not got to bear those cares alone! No, nor yet at all, for concerning them He has said, Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. I have got to come here and preach. Who is sufficient for these things? But I am not to preach aloneMy Grace is sufficient for you. His strength shall be made perfect in your weakness. You have to go to that Sunday school class. Oh, how incorrigible those boys are and how careless those girlsbut you have not got to win those souls aloneJesus will go and His Spirit will be there, and you shall be helped in your work! Do try and realize all through this year that you are never alone. Not only is it, You, God, see me, but it is this, Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed, I am your God. And Christ is not with you behind, or pushing you into the danger, but He is with you ahead of youHe goes ahead of youHe is the shield catching the fiery darts upon Himself! You shall come behind the screen and be sheltered by His precious promise.

I do not know where you may be this year, but let this thought abide with youHe will be with you! Perhaps you will cross the sea. Your lot may be to help to colonize some distant land. Over the sea and on the billows, and on the shore so strange to youHe will be your near Companion! Perhaps this year there is a trial awaiting you, very heavy, or perhaps a temptation arising out of some new joy or fresh prosperity. Do not fear ityou shall be safe on the hilltops of joy and in the Valley of Humiliation. He is with you anywhere! A child is told, perhaps at nightfall, that he has to go a considerable distance. It is to a lonely farmhouse and the little one trembles to go across the moor in the dark. Oh, the mother says. but Father is going with you. Oh, then that changes the aspect of everything! The boy is pleased to go! Even the dangers that seemed so great, only attract him nowhe will be glad to be with his father. Through the moor land of another year, you have to go, and it may be dark and cold, but your heavenly Father and your blessed Elder Brother will be with you! Therefore, be not afraid. You will have to contend this year for the faith delivered once for all to the saints, and to do much service, too. If you are to render a good account at the years end, you are to try and live this year, not at a slow rate, like the cold-blooded frog, but to have hot blood in you! Regulated by prudence, and yet boiling over with a burning zeal, you are to serve the Lord! And it may be you think you cannot do it. Is anything impossible when He helps you? Is any sacrifice impossible when it is for Him? Is any difficulty insurmountable when He, Himself, gives the all-sufficient strength? Oh, this is a very choice thought, though a very simple one, that Jesus will be with you all the year through!   
The only other thought is, take care that you abide with Him. He is a quick walker. Idle souls will be left behind. He is a holy liver. Unclean spirits will find Him part company with them. Be you watchful, vigilant, sober, careful, zealous, and seek to have perpetual fellowship with Jesus Christ. I am sure those are the happiest that live nearest to God! I am certain of it. I do know it is not the wealthiest who are the happiest. It is not those who have the most health that are always happiest, and those who are most esteemed among their fellow men. There is one rule without any exceptionhe who lives nearest to God has the most of that profound peace of God which passes all understanding. He says to you, Abide in Me. May His words abide in you! May you abide in Him and may this be to each one of you, and to this Church, the very happiest year we have ever had! Oh, that some poor sinner would seek the Savior! May the Lords lovely attractions entice Him!   
And I shall close by saying thisthat if any soul longs for Christ, Christ is already longing for Himand if you have a half of a desire towards Him, He has a heart full of desire towards you! There never was a soul that had a head start on Christ in the matter of desire for salvation. God grant you Grace to touch Jesus and then to follow after Him, and to make His blessing abide with you, both now and forever. Amen and amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ISAIAH 35, HEBREWS 12:1-6.**

Verse 1. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them. They shall be so glad that they shall inspire gladness where all was desolation, brooding, melancholy and dragons howls. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them.

1. And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. Gods people are a happy-making people. They are a blessing in themselves and they shall be a blessing to others till all shall say, These are the seed that the Lord has blessed. The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

2. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. A wonderful sight to see, for there is one of the most lovely sights in the world when the Glory and excellency of God are to be seen in the works of His Grace in His own people. It is such a sight that it makes men first rejoice in their hearts and then rejoice with their tongues. They shall rejoice with joy and singing, which is the double rejoicing of the heart and of the lips. Well, these must be a favored people who, wherever they go, can make others glad after this fashion! Brothers and Sisters, they must be full or they could not overflow! They must be alive, or else they could not quicken the desert places. They must be in flower, blooming like the rose, or they could not make the wilderness so full of verdure. The Lord grant that we may be in that state, that we may be able to go into the wilderness. There are some of Gods people that cannot trust themselves to go where they are needed because they have not Divine Grace enough. They are so weak that they are like the weak man standing on the rivers brink who cannot leap in to pull out a drowning man for fear he should be pulled in himself. But, oh, they are blessed, indeed, who dare go into the wildernesses and into the solitary places, and carry the transforming benediction of Heaven with them till the wilderness changes its dressand the brown of the arid sand gives place to the ruddiness of the rosebecause God has come there with His people!

3. Strengthen you the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Are there such here tonight? No doubt there areweak at work and weak at praying. The two things go togetherweak hands and feeble knees. May they both be strengthened!

4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. It is very singular how salvation and vengeance are so often associated together in Scripture. It is the day of salvation, and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn. Vengeance upon the false is the best consolation to the true! When God smites the sham, even to the heart, then does He bless those in which His Truth is found. He will come and save you.

5, 6. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. See what the Presence of Christ does? See what the presence of Christs people will do when He comes in them and with them! They make the wilderness rejoice. But, besides that, the dwellers that are found in the wildernessthese lame and deaf peopleget the blessing. Oh, may God make us to be a desert to others of this sort!

7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. The greenest spots your eyes ever rested upon are just there where the grass is so rooted in the morass that it is always green with a delicate tinge, and the reeds and rushes spring up abundantly. O God, make poor parched hearts to become like this! You barren ones, you desolate onesHe can give you the best verdure that is possible! Your hearts shall be as green and fresh as the spots where there is grass with reeds and rushes.

8. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it: but it shall be for others: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Oh, what a blessing that is to us poor fools! We could err anywhere. To err is human and we seem to have come in for a double share of it. The more we look at our lives, the more we see the folly of our hearts. What a mercy it is that when we walk in the way of faith, in the way of Christ, fools as we are, we shall not err!

9, 10. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go on it, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Like frightened things. They kept us company part of our road, but when the Lord appeared, they took to themselves wings and fled away. We could not tell where they were gone. We were surprised to find that they had quite vanished. Oh, for the appearing of the Lord tonight to His mourning people who may be here!

**HEBREWS 12:1-8.**   
Verse 1. Therefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us. Or. entangle us.

1-3. And let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. For consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. The Lord does not wish His peoples hands to hang down and their knees to become weak, so in this passage, as in many others, He administers gracious remedies! Among the rest, He bids us consider His own dear Son. Shall we faint under our small afflictions when He endured so well under His heavy burdens? Come, be strengthened, my weak heart

*His way was much rougher and darker than thine Did Christ, your Lord, suffer, and will you repine?*

4. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. It has hardly come to blows and bruises yetcertainly not to bloody strokes! You have not yet lost blood for Christ.

5. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, despise not you the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him. Neither think too little of it, nor too much of ittoo little of it by despising it and not listening to the voice of the rod, nor too much of it by fainting when you are rebuked of Him.

6. For whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. Oh, what comfort there is here! Whenever we are under the scourging hand of God, how we ought to be cheered with the thought that this is a part of the heritage of the children! There are Elis who spoil their children. God is not one of them. He spares not the rod and the more He loves, often the more He corrects. A tree of common fruit may be left alone so long as there is some little fruit on it, but the very best fruit gets the sharpest pruningand I have noticed that in those countries where the best wine is made, the vinedressers cut the shoots right close in, and in the winter you cannot tell that there is a vine there at all unless you watch very carefully! They must cut them back sharp to get sweet clusters. The Lord does thus with His beloved. It is not anger. Afflictions are not always anger. There are often tokens of great love!

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 #678 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAISE YOUR GOD, O ZION!

NO. 678

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING. FEBRUARY 25, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And when He was come near, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with   
a loud voice for all the mighty works that   
they had seen, saying, Blessed is the King   
that comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in   
Heaven, and glory in the highest! And some of   
the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke Your disciples. But He answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. Luke 19:37-40.**

THE Savior was a Man of Sorrows, but every thoughtful mind has discovered the fact that down deep in His innermost soul He must have carried an inexhaustible treasury of refined and heavenly joy. I suppose that of all the human race there was never a man who had a deeper, purer, or more abiding peace than our Lord Jesus Christ. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Benevolence is joy. The highest benevolence must, from the very nature of things, have afforded the deepest possible delight.

To be engaged in the most blessed of all errands, to foresee the marvelous results of His labors in time and in eternity, and even to see around Him the fruits of the good which He had done in the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead must have given to such a sympathetic heart as that which beat within the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ much of secret satisfaction and joy. There were a few remarkable seasons when this joy manifested itself. At that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth. Christ had His songs though it was night with Him. And though His face was marred and His countenance had lost the luster of earthly happiness, yet sometimes it was lit up with a matchless splendor of unparalleled satisfaction as He thought upon the recompense of the reward, and in the midst of the congregation sang His praise unto God. In this, the Lord Jesus is a blessed picture of His Church on earth.

This is the day of Zions troubleat this hour the Church expects to walk in sympathy with her Lord along a thorny road. She is outside the campthrough much tribulation she is forcing her way to the crown. She expects to meet with reproaches. To bear the cross is her office, and to be scorned and counted an alien by her mothers children is her lot. And yet the Church has a deep well of joy of which none can drink but her own children! There are stores of wine, and oil, and corn hidden in the midst of our Jerusalem upon which the saints of God are evermore sustained and nurtured. And sometimes, as in our Saviors case, we have our seasons of intense delight for there is a river, the streams which make glad the city of our God.

Exiles though we are, we rejoice in our King! Yes, in Him we exceedingly rejoice, while in His name we set up our banners! This is a season with us as a Church when we are peculiarly called upon to rejoice in God. The Lord Jesus, in the narrative before us, was going to Jerusalem as His disciples fondly hoped, to take the throne of David and set up the longexpected kingdom. Well might they shout for joy, for the Lord was in their midstin their midst in state, riding amidst the acclamations of a multitude who had been glad partakers of His goodness. Jesus Christ is in our midst today! The kingdom is securely His. We see the crown glittering upon His brow. He has been riding through our streets, healing our blind, raising our dead and speaking words of comfort to our mourners!

We, too, attend Him in state today, and the acclamations of little children are not lacking, for from our Sunday school there have come songs of converted youngsters who sing gladly, as did the children of Jerusalem in days of yore, Hosanna! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

I want, dear Friends, this morning, to stir up in all of us the spirit of holy joy because our King is in our midst! I wish that we may welcome Him and rejoice in Him, and that while He is working His mighty deeds of salvation throughout this congregation so graciously, He may not lack such music as our feeble lips can afford Him. I shall, therefore, invite your attention to these four verses by way of example, that we may take a pattern for our praise from this inspired description.

We shall observe four thingsFirst, delightful praise. Secondly, appropriate song, Thirdly, intrusive objections, and fourthly, an unanswerable argument.

I. First, we shall observe here DELIGHTFUL PRAISE. In the thirtyseventh verse every word is significant and deserves the careful notice of all who would learn aright the lesson of how to magnify the Savior. To begin with, the praise rendered to Christ was speedy praise. The happy choristers did not wait till He had entered the city, but when He was come near, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, they began to rejoice. It is well to have a quick eye to perceive occasions for gratitude.

Blind Unbelief and blear-eyed Thanklessness allow the favors of God to be forgotten in ingratitude, and, without praises, die. They walk in the noonday of Mercy and see no light to sing by. But a believing, cheerful, grateful spirit detects at once the rising of the Sun of Mercy and begins to sing, even at the break of day! Christian, if you would sing of the mercy you have already, you would soon have more! If twilight made you glad, you should soon have the bliss of noon! I am certain that the Church in these days has lost much by not being thankful for little. We have had many Prayer Meetings, but few, very few, Praise Meetingsas if the Church could cry loud enough when her own ends were to be answered but was dumb as to music for her Lord.

Her King acts to her very much as He did with the man with the pound. That man put not out the pound to interest and therefore it was taken away. We have not thanked Him for little mercies, and therefore even these have been removed, and Churches have become barren and deserted by the Spirit of God. Let us lift up the voice of praise to our Master because He has blessed us these twelve years. We have had a continual stream of revival! The cries of sinners have sounded in our earsevery day we have seen souls convertedI was about to say almost every hour of the week, and that by the space of these twelve years, and of late, we have had a double portion!

Benjamins mess has been set near our place at the table! We have been made to feast on royal dainties and have been filled with bread even to the full. Shall we not then praise God? Ah, let us not require twice telling of it, but let our souls begin to praise Him, even now, that He comes near unto Jerusalem!

It strikes us at once, also, that this was unanimous praise. Observe, not only the multitude, but the whole multitude of the disciples rejoiced and praised Him! Not one silent tongue among the disciplesnot one who withheld his song. And yet, I suppose, those disciples had their trials as we have ours. There might have been a sick wife at home, or a child withering with disease. They were doubtless poorwe know they wereand poverty is never without its pinches. They were men of like passions with ourselves. They had to struggle with inbred sin, and with temptation, and yet there seems to have been no one who on those grounds excluded himself from the choir of singers on that happy day!

Oh, my Soul, whatever you have about you which might bow you down, be glad when you remember that Jesus Christ is glorified in the midst of His Church! Why, my Brother, is that harp of yours hanging on the willows? Have you nothing to sing about? Has He done nothing for you? Why, if you have no personal reason for blessing God, then lend us your heart and voice to help us, for we have more praise-work on hand than we can get through alonewe have more to praise Him for than we are able to discharge without extra aid! Our work of praise is too great for us, come and help us! Sing on our behalf, if you cannot on your own, and then, perhaps, you will catch the flame and find something, after all, for which you, too, must bless Him.

I know there are some of you who do not feel as if you could praise God this morning. Let us ask the Master to put your harp in tune. Oh be not silent! Be not silent! Bless Him! If you cannot bless Him for temporals, bless Him for spirituals! And if you have not of late experimentally enjoyed many of these, then bless Him for what He is. Bless Him for that dear face covered with the bloody sweatfor those pierced hands, for that opened side will you not praise Him? Why, surely, if He had not died for me I must still love Him, to think of His goodness in dying for others! His kindness, the generosity of His noble heart in dying for His enemies might well provoke the most unbelieving to a song.

I am, therefore, not content unless all of you will contribute your note. I would have every bird throw in its note, though some cannot imitate the lark or nightingale! Yes, I would have every tree of the forest clap its hands, and even the hyssop on the wall wave in adoration! Come, Beloved, cheer up! Let dull care and dark fear be gone! Up with harps and down with doubts! It must be praise from the whole multitude. The praise must be unanimousnot one chord out of order to spoil the tune.

Next, it was multitudinous. The whole multitude. There is something most inspiriting and exhilarating in the noise of a multitude singing Gods praises. Sometimes, when we have been in good tune, and have sung Praise God from whom all blessings flow, our music has rolled upward like thunder to yon dome and has reverberated peal on peal! These have been the happiest moments some of us have ever knownwhen every tongue was praise, and every heart was joy! Oh, let us renew those happy times! Let us anticipate the season when the dwellers in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, of every age and of every clime shall assemble on the celestial hilltops and swell the everlasting song extolling Jesus Lord of all!

Jesus loves the praise of many. He loves to hear the voices of all the blood-washed   
*Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, But all their joys are one.*

We are not so many as that, but we are counted by thousands so let us praise His namethe whole multitude! Still it is worthy of observation that while the praise was multitudinous, it was quite select. It was the whole multitude of the disciples. The Pharisees did not praise Himthey were murmuring. All true praise must come from true hearts. If you do not learn of Christ you can not render to Him acceptable song. These disciples, of course, were of different sorts. Some of them had but just enlisted in the armyjust learned to sit at His feet. Some had worked miracles in His name, and, having been called to the Apostolic office, had preached the Word to othersbut they were all disciples.

I trust that in this congregation there is a vast majority of disciples well, then, all of you, you who have lately come into His school, you who have long been in ityou who have become fathers in Israel and are teaching others, the whole multitude of disciples, I hope, will praise God! I could wishGod grant the wishI could wish that those who are not disciples might soon become so. Take My yoke upon you, He said, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

A disciple is a learner. You may not know much, but you need not know anything in coming to Christ! Christ begins with ignorance and bestows wisdom. If you do but know that you know nothing, you know enough to become a disciple of Christ Jesus! There is no matriculation necessary in order to enter into Christs college. He takes the fools and makes them know the wonders of His dying love. Oh that you may become a disciple! Write my name down, Sir, you say to the writer with the inkhorn by his side, and be you from now on a humble follower of the Lamb. Now, though I would not have those who are not disciples close their mouths whenever others sing, yet I do think there are some hymns in which they would behave more honestly if they did not joinfor there are some expressions which hardly ought to come from unconverted lips. Better far would it be if they would pray, Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

You may have a very sweet voice, my Friend, and may sing with admirable taste and in exquisite harmony any of the parts, but God does not accept the praise where the heart is absent. The best tune in the book is one called Hearts. The whole multitude of the disciples whom Jesus loves are the proper persons to extol the Redeemers name. May you, dear Hearer, be among that company!

Then, in the next place, you will observe that the praise they rendered was joyful praise. The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice. I hope the doctrine that Christians ought to be gloomy will soon be driven out of the universe! There are no people in the world who have such a right to be happy, nor have such cause to be joyful as the saints of the living God! All Christian duties should be done joyfullyand especially the work of praising the Lord.

I have been in congregations where the tune was dolorous to the very last degreewhere the time was so dreadfully slow that one wondered whether they would ever be able to sing through the 119th Psalm whether, to use Wattss expression, eternity would not be too short for them to get through it! And altogether the spirit of the people has seemed to be so damp, so heavy, so dead that we might have supposed that they were met to prepare their minds for hanging rather than for blessing the ever-gracious God!

Why, Brethren, true praise sets the heart ringing its bells and hanging out its streamers! Never hang your flag at half-mast when you praise God! No! Run up every color, let every banner wave in the breeze and let all the powers and passions of your spirit exult and rejoice in God your Savior! They rejoiced. We are really most horribly afraid of being too happy. Some Christians think cheerfulness a very dangerous folly, if not a ruinous vice. That joyous Hundredth Psalm has been altered in all the English versions

*All people that on earth do dwell,   
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,   
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell,   
Come you before Him and rejoice.*

Him serve with fear, says the English version. But the Scotch version has less thistle and far more rose in it. Listen to it, and catch its holy happiness

*Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell; Come you before Him and rejoice.*   
How do Gods creatures serve Him out of doors? The birds do not sit on a Sunday with folded wings, dolefully silent on the boughs of the trees! They sing as sweetly as may be even though the raindrops fall! As for the newborn lambs in the fieldthey skip to His praise though the season is damp and cold. Heaven and earth are lit up with gladness, and why not

the hearts and houses of the saints? Him serve with mirth. Well said the Psalmistbefore Him exceedingly rejoice. It was joyful praise.

The next point we must mention is that it was demonstrative praise. They praised Him with their voices and with a loud voice. Propriety very greatly objects to the praise which is rendered by Primitive Methodists at times. Their shouts and hallelujahs are thought by some delicate minds to be very shocking. I would not, however, join in the censure, lest I should be numbered among the Pharisees who said, Master, rebuke Your disciples. I wish more people were as earnest and even as vehement as the Methodists used to be.

In our Lords day we see that the people expressed the joy which they feltI am not sure that they expressed it in the most harmonious mannerbut at any rate they expressed it in a hearty, lusty shout. They altogether praised with a loud voice. It is said of Mr. Rowland Hill that on one occasion someone sat on the pulpit stairs who sang in his ears with such a sharp shrill voice that he could endure it no longer, and said to the good woman, I wish you would be quiet. She answered, It comes from my heart, Oh, said he, pray forgive mesing away! Sing as loudly as you will.

And truly, dear Friends, though one might wish there were more melody in it, yet if your music comes from the heart we cannot object to the loudness, or we might be found objecting to that which the Savior could not and would not blame. Must we not be loud? Do you wonder that we speak out? Have not His mercies a loud tongue? Do not His kindnesses deserve to be proclaimed aloud? Were not the cries upon the Cross so loud that the very rocks were rent therebyand shall our music be a whisper?

No, as Watts declares, we would  *Loud as His thunders shout His praise,   
And sound it lofty as His Throne.*

If not with loud voices actually in sound, yet we would make the praise of God loud by our actions, which speak louder than any words! We would extol Him by great deeds of kindness, and love, and self-denial, and zeal so that our actions may assist our words. The whole multitude praised Him with a loud voice. Let me ask every Christian here to do something in the praise of Godto speak in some way for his Master. I would say, speak todayif you cannot with your voicespeak by act and deed, but join in the hearty shout of all the saints of God while you praise and bless the name of our ever gracious Lord.

The praise rendered, though very demonstrative, was very reasonable the reason is givenfor all the mighty works that they had seen. My dear Friends, we have seen many mighty works which Christ has done. I do not know what these disciples had seen. Certain it is that after Christ entered into Jerusalem He was generous with His miracles. The blind were healed, the deaf had their ears openedmany of those possessed with devils were deliveredand incurable diseases gave way at His word. I think we have the like reason in a spiritual sense. What has God worked? It has been marvelousas our elders would tell you if they could recount what God has donethe many who have come forward during the last fortnight to tell what God has done for their souls.

The Holy Spirit has met with some whom up to now no ministry had reached. Some have been convicted of sin who were wrapped up in selfrighteous rags. Others have been comforted whose desponding hearts drew near unto despair. I am sure those Brethren who sat to see enquirers must have been astonished when they found some hundreds coming to talk about the things that make for their peace! It was blessed work, I doubt not, for them. They, therefore, would lead the strain.

But you have all in your measure seen something of it. During the meetings we have held we have enjoyed an overpowering sense of the Divine Presence. Without excitement there has been a holy bowing of spirit, and yet a blessed lifting up of hope, and joy, and holy fervor! The Master has cast sweet smiles upon His Church! He has come near to His beloved. He has given her the tokens of His affection and made her to rejoice with joy unspeakable! Any joy which we have towards Christ, then, will be reasonable enough, for we have seen His mighty works.

With another remark I shall close this first headthe reason for their joy was a personal one. There is no praise to God so sweet as that which flows from the man who has tasted that the Lord is gracious. Some of you have been converted during the last two or three months. Oh, you must bless Him! You must take the front rank now and bless His name for the mighty work which you have seen in yourself! The things which once were dear to you, you now abhor, and those things which seemed dry and empty are now sweet and full of savor. God has turned your darkness into light! He has brought you up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay and has set your feet upon a rock! Shall not your established goings yield Him a grateful song? You shall bless Him!

Others here present have had their own children saved. God has looked on one family and another, and taken one, and two, and three. He has been pleased to lay His hand upon the elders among us and bless their families. Oh sing unto His name! Sing praises for the mighty works which we have seen! This will be commonplace talk enough to those of you who have not seen itbut those who have will feel the tears starting to their eyes as they think of son and daughter of whom they can say, Behold, he prays!

Saints of God, I wish I could snatch a firebrand from the altar of praise that burns before the great Throne of GodI wish I could fire your hearts with itbut it is the Masters work to do it. Oh, may He do it now! May every one of you feel as if you could cast your crown at His feet! As if you could sing like the cherubim and the seraphim, nor yield even the first place of gratitude to the brightest spirit before the Eternal Throne! This morning may it be truly said, The whole multitude of the disciples rejoiced with a loud voice for all the mighty things which they had seen.

*O come, loud anthems let us sing,   
Loud thanks to our Almighty King.   
For we our voices high should raise,   
When our salvations Rock we praise.   
Into His Presence let us haste,   
To thank Him for His favors past!   
To Him address, in joyful songs,   
The praise that to His name belongs.*

II. I shall now lead you on to the second pointtheir praise found vent for itself in AN APPROPRIATE SONG. Blessed is the King that comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest! It was an appropriate song, if you will remember that it had Christ for its subject! My heart is writing of a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king.

No song is so sweet from believing lips as that which tells of Him who loved us and who gave Himself for us. This particular song sings of Christ in His Character of Kinga right royal song, thena melody fit for a coronation day. Crown Him! Crown Him Lord of all! That was the refrain. Blessed be the King. It sang of that King as commissioned by the Most High, who comes in the name of the Lord. Think of Christ as bearing Divine authority, as coming down to men in God our Fathers nameas speaking what He has heard in Heaven, fulfilling no self-espoused errand, but a mission upon which the Divine Father sent Him according to His purpose and decreeall this is matter for music!

Oh bless the Lord, you saints, as you remember that your Savior is the Lords AnointedHe has set Him on His Throne! Jehovah, who was pleased to bruise Him, has said, Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. See the Godhead of your Savior! He whom you adore, the Son of Mary, is the Son of God! He who did ride upon a colt, the foal of an ass, did also ride upon a cherub and did flyyes, He rode upon the wings of the wind!

They spread their garments in the way, and broke down branches. It was a humble triumph, but long before this the angels had strewn His path with adoring songs. Before Him went the lightning, coals of fire were in His track, and up from His Throne went forth hailstones and coals of fire! Blessed be the King! Oh praise Him this day! Praise the King, Divine and commissioned of His Father!

The burden of their song was, however, of Christ present in their midst. I do not think they would have rejoiced so loudly and sweetly if He had not been there. That was the source and center of their mirththe King riding upon a colt, the foal of an assthe King triumphant! They could not but be glad when He revealed Himself. Beloved, our King is here! We sang at the beginning of this visitation, Arise, O King of Grace, arise, and enter to Your rest! You remember our singing the verse

*O You that are the Mighty One,*

*Your sword gird on Your thigh.*   
And King Jesus has done so in stateHe has ridden prosperouslyand out of the ivory palaces His heart has been made glad! And the Kings daughter, all-glorious within, standing at His right hand, cannot but be glad, too! Loud to His praise wake every string of your heart and let your souls make the Lord Jesus the burden of their song!

This was an appropriate song, in the next place, because it had God for its object. They extolled God, God in Christ, when they thus lifted up their voices. They said, Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest. When we extol Christ, we desire to bless the infinite Majesty that gave Christ to us. Thanks be unto the Father for His unspeakable gift! O eternal God, we, Your creatures in this little world do unfeignedly bless You for Your great purpose and decree by which You did choose us to be illustrious exhibitions of Your majesty and love!

We bless You that You did give us Grace in Christ Your Son before the starry sky was spread abroad! We praise You, O God, and magnify Your name as we enquire, What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you visit him? How could You deign to stoop from all the Glory of Your infinity to be made Man, to suffer, to bleed, to die for us? Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto His name. Oh that I could give place to some inspired bard, some seer of old, who, standing before you with mouth streaming with holy eloquence, should extol Him that lives, but once was slain, and bless the God who sent Him here below that He might redeem unto Himself a people who should show forth His praise!

I think this song to have been very appropriate for another reason, namely, because it had the universe for its scope. It was not praise within walls as ours this morningthe multitude sung in the open air with no walls but the horizonwith no roof but the arch of Heaven! Their song, though it was from Heaven, did not stay there, but enclosed the world within its range. It was, Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest! It is very singularly like that song of the angels, that Christmas carol of the spirits from on high when Christ was bornbut it differs, for the angels song was, Peace on earth, and this at the gates of Jerusalem was, Peace in Heaven.

It is the nature of song to spread itself. From Heaven the sacred joy began when angels sang, and then the fire blazed down to earth in the words, Peace on earth. But now the song began on earth, and so it blazed up to Heaven with the words, Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest! Is it not a wonderful thing that a company of poor beings like we here below can really affect the highest heavens? Every throb of gratitude which heaves our hearts glows through Heaven! God can receive no actual increase of Glory from His creature for He has infinite Glory and majesty but yet the creature manifests that Glory.

A grateful man here below, when his heart is all on fire with sacred love, warms Heaven itself! The multitude sung of peace in Heaven as though the angels were established in their peaceful seats by the Savior as though the war which God had waged with sin was now over because the conquering King was come! Oh let us seek after music which shall be fitted for other spheres! I would begin the music here and so my soul should rise. Oh for some heavenly notes to bear my passions to the skies! It was appropriate to the occasion because the universe was its sphere.

And it seems also to have been most appropriate because it had gratitude for its spirit. They cried aloud, BlessedBlessed is the King. We cannot bless God and yet we do bless Him in the sense in which He blesses us. Our goodness cannot extend to Him, but we reflect the blessedness which streams from Him as light from the sun. Blessed be Jesus! My Brothers and Sisters, have you never wished to make Him happier? Have you not wished that you could extol Him? Let Him be exalted! Let Him sit on high! I have almost wished, even selfishly, that He were not so glorious as He is so that we might help to lift Him higher! Oh, if the crushing of my body, soul, and spirit would make Him one atom more glorious, I would not only consent to the sacrifice, but bless His name that He counted me worthy to do so!

All that we can do brings nothing to Him. Yet, Brethren, I would that He had His own. Oh that He rode over our great land in triumph! Would that King Jesus were as well known here now as He was once in Puritan times! Would that Scotland were as loyal to Him as in Covenanting periods! Would that Jesus had His majesty visible in the eyes of all men! We pray for this! We seek this! And among the chief joys our most chief joy is to know that God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow!

We have thus said something about the appropriateness of the song. May you, each of you, light upon such hymns as will serve to set forth your own case and show forth the mercy of God in saving you. Do not be slack in praising Him in such notes as may be most suitable to your own condition.

III. Thirdly, and very brieflyfor I am not going to give much time to these menwe have INTRUSIVE OBJECTIONS. Master, rebuke Your disciples. We know that voicethe old grunt of the Pharisee. What could he do otherwise? Such is the man and such must his communications be. While he can dare to boast, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, he is not likely to join in praises such as other men lift up to Heaven.

But why did these Pharisees object? I suppose it was first of all because they thought there would be no praise for themselves! If the multitude had been saying, Oh these blessed Pharisees! These excellent Pharisees! What broad phylacteries! What admirable hems to their garments! How diligently and scrupulously they tithe their mint and their anise and their cummin! What a wonder that God should permit us, poor vile creatures, to look upon these super-excellent incarnations of virtue, I will be bound to say there would not have been a man among them who would have said, Master, rebuke Your disciples. A proud heart never praises God for it hoards up praise for itself.

In the next place, they were jealous of the people. They did not feel so happy themselves and they could not bear that other people should be glad. They were like the elder brother who said, Yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. Was that a reason why nobody else should be merry? A very ill reason, truly! Oh, if we cannot rejoice, ourselves, let us stand out of the way of other people! If we have no music in our own hearts, let us not wish to stop those who have!

But I think the main point was that they were jealous of Jesus. They did not like to have Christ crowned with majesty. Certainly this is the drift of the human heart. It does not wish to see Jesus Christ extolled. Preach up morality or dry doctrine, or ceremonies and many will be glad to hear your notes. But preach up Jesus Christ and some will say, Master, rebuke your disciples! It was not ill advice of an old preacher to a young beginner when he said, Preach nothing down but sin, and preach nothing up but Christ.

Brethren, let us praise nothing up but Christ! Have nothing to say about your Church. Say nothing about your denomination. Hold your tongue about the ministerbut praise Christand I know the Pharisees will not like it! But that is an excellent reason to give them more of it, for that which Satan does not admire he ought to have more of. The preaching of Christ is the whip that flogs the devil. The preaching of Christ is the thunderbolt, the sound of which makes all Hell shake. Let us never be silent! We shall put to confusion all our foes if we do but extol Christ Jesus the Lord. Master, rebuke Your disciples!

Well, there is not much of this for Jesus Christ to rebuke in the Christian Church in the present day. There used to bethere used to be a little of what the world calls fanaticism. A consecrated cobbler once set forth to preach the Gospel in Hindustan. There were men who would go preaching the Gospel among the heathen, counting not their lives dear unto them. The day was when the Church was so foolish as to fling away precious lives for Christs Glory! Ah, she is more prudent nowadays. Alas! Alas for your prudence! She is so calm and so quietno Methodists zeal, now! Even that denomination which did seem alive has become most proper and most cold.

And we are so charitable, too. We let the most abominable doctrines be preached and we put our finger on our lip, and say, Theres so many good people who think so. Nothing is to be rebuked nowadays, Brethren! Ones soul is sick of this! Oh, for the old fire again! The Church will never prosper till it comes once more. Oh, for the old fanaticism, for that, indeed, was the Spirit of God making mens spirits in earnest! Oh, for the old doing and daring that risked everything and cared for nothing except to glorify Him who shed His blood upon the Cross! May we live to see such bright and holy days again! The world may murmur but Christ will not rebuke.

IV. We come now to the last point, which is thisAN UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT. He said, If these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out. Brothers and Sisters, I think that is very much our case. If we were not to praise God, the very stones might cry out against us! We MUST praise the Lord! Woe unto us if we do not! It is impossible for us to hold our tongues! Saved from Hell and be silent? Secure of Heaven and be ungrateful? Bought with precious blood and hold our tongues? Filled with the Spirit and not speak? Restrain from fear of feeble man with the Spirits course within our souls? God forbid!

In the name of the Most High let such a thought be given to the winds! What? Our children are savedthe offspring of our loins brought to Christ! What? See them springing up like willows by the water courses, and no awakening of song, no gladness, no delight! Oh, then we were worse than brutes and our hearts would have been steeled and become as adamant. We must praise God! What? The King in our midst, King Jesus smiling into our souls, feasting us at His table, making His word precious to us, and not praise Him! Why if Satan could know the delight of Christs company he might begin to lovebut we, we were worse than devils if we did not praise the name of Jesus! What? The Kings arm made bare, His enemies subdued, His triumphant chariot rolling through our streets, and no song!

Oh Zion, if we forget to sing let our right hand forget her cunning if we count not the Kings triumph above our chief joy. What? The King coming! His advent drawing near, the signs of blessing in the sky and air abound, and yet no song! Oh, we must bless Him! Hosanna! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! But could the stones ever cry out? Yes, they could, and if they were to speak they would have much to talk of even as we have this day. If the stones were to speak they could tell of their Makerand shall not we tell of Him who made us anew, and out of stones raised up children unto Abraham?

They could speak of ages long since gonethe old rocks could tell of chaos and order and the handiwork of God in various stages of creations dramaand cannot we talk of Gods decrees, of Gods great work in ancient times, and all that He did for His Church? If the stones were to speak they could tell of their breaker, how he took them from the quarry, and made them fit for the templeand cannot we tell of our Creator and Maker, who broke our hearts with the hammer of His Word that He might build us into His temple?

If the stones were to speak they would tell of their builder who polished them and fashioned them after the similitude of a palaceand shall not we talk of our Architect and Builder who has put us in our place in the temple of the living God? Oh, if the stones could speak they might have a long, long story to tell by way of memorial, for many a time has a great stone been rolled as a memorial unto Godand we can tell of Ebenezers, stones of help, stones of remembrance! The broken stones of the Law cry out against us, but Christ Himself, who has rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, speaks for us.

Stones might well cry out, but we will not let them! We will hush their noise with ours! We will break forth into sacred song and bless the majesty of the Most High all our days! Let this day and tomorrow be especially consecrated to holy joys and may the Lord, in infinite mercy, fill your souls right full of itboth in practical deeds of kindness and benevolence and works of praise! Blessed be His name who lives forever and ever!

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1570 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JESUS   
NO. 1570

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 28, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**When He had come near, He beheld the city and wept over it. Luke 19:41.**

ON three occasions we are told that Jesus wept. You know them well, but it may be worth while to refresh your memories. The first was when our Lord was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. He saw the sorrow of the sisters and He meditated upon the fruit of sin in the death and corruption of the body and He groaned in spirit and it is written that Jesus wept. Those who divided the chapters did well to make a separate verse of that simple sentence. It stands alone, the smallest and yet, in some respects, the greatest verse in the whole Bible! It shines as a diamond of the first water. It contains a world of healing balm condensed into a drop. Here we have much in littlea wealth of meaning in two words.

The second occasion we have before us and we will make it the theme of our discourse. At the sight of the beloved but rebellious city, Jesus wept. The third occasion is mentioned by the Apostle Paul in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews where he tells us what else we might not have known, that the Savior, in the days of His flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death and was heard in that He feared. That passage relates to the Gethsemane agony in which a shower of bitter tears was mingled with the bloody sweat. The strength of His love strove with the anguish of His soul and, in the process, forced forth the sacred waters of His eyes. Thus our Savior wept in sympathy with domestic sorrow and sanctified the tears of the bereaved.

We, too, may weep when brethren and friends lie dead, for Jesus wept. There need not be rebellion in our mourning, for Jesus fully consented to the Divine will and yet He wept. We may weep at the graves of those we love and yet be guiltless of unbelief as to their resurrection, for Jesus knew that Lazarus would rise again and yet He wept. Our Lord, in weeping over Jerusalem, showed His sympathy with national troubles and His distress at the evils which awaited His countrymen. Men should not cease to be patriots when they become Believerssaints should bemoan the ills which come upon the guilty people among whom they are numbered and do so all the more because they are saints.

Our Lords third weeping was induced by the great burden of human guilt which pressed upon Him. This shows us how we, too, should look upon the guilt of men and mourn over it before God. But in this special weeping Jesus is alonethere was a something in the tears of Gethsemane to which we cannot reach, for He who shed them was then beginning to suffer as our Substitute and in that case He must necessarily tread the winepress alone and of the people there must be none with Him. Behold beneath the olive trees a solitary Weeper enduring a grief which, blessed be His name, is now impossible to us, seeing He has taken away the transgressions which called for it!

We will now turn to this second instance of our Saviors weeping and here we find, when we look at the original words, that it is not exactly expressed by the words used in our admirable English version. We there read, He beheld the city and wept over it, but the Greek means a great deal more than tears and includes sobs and cries. Perhaps it may be best to read it, He lamented over it. He suffered a deep inward anguish and He expressed it by signs of woe and by words which showed how bitter was His grief. Our subject will not be the lamentations of Jeremiah, but the lamentations of Jesusthe lamentations of Him who could more truly say than the weeping Prophet, I am the Man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. My eyes run down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of My people. Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me.

Jesus is here a King by general acclamation, but King of grief by personal lamentation. He is the Sovereign of sorrow, weeping while riding in triumph in the midst of His followers. Did He ever look more kingly than when He showed the tenderness of His heart towards His rebellious subjects? The city which had been the metropolis of the house of David never saw so truly a royal man before, for He is most fit to rule who is most ready to sympathize! We shall, this morning, as God shall help us, first, consider our Lords inward grief. And then, secondly, His verbal lamentation. Oh for the power of the Spirit to bless the meditation to the melting of all our hearts! O Lord, speak to the rock and bid the waters flow, or, if it pleases You better, strike it with Your rod and make it gush with rivers only in some way make us answer to the mourning of our Savior

*Did Christ over sinners weep   
And shall our cheeks be dry?   
Let floods of penitential grief   
Burst forth from every eye.*

I. First, we are to contemplate OUR LORDS INWARD GRIEF. We note concerning it that it was so intense that it could not be restrained by the occasion. The occasion was one entirely by itselfa brief gleam of sunlight in a cloudy day, a glimpse of summer amid a cruel winter. His disciples had brought the colt and had placed Him on it and He was riding to the city which was altogether moved at His coming. The multitudes were eager to do Him homage with waving branches and loud hosannas, while His disciples in the inner circle were exulting in songs of praise which almost emulated the angelic chorales of His birth night. Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill toward men, found its echo when the disciples said, Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord: peace in Heaven and glory in the highest.

Yet amidst the hosannas of the multitude, while the palm branches were yet in many hands, the Savior stopped to weep! On the very spot where David had gone centuries before weeping, the Son of David stayed awhile to look upon the city and to pour out His lamentation! That must have been deep grief which ran counter to all the demands of the season and violated, as it were, all the decorum of the occasion. It turned a festival into a mourning, a triumph into a lament. Ah, He knew the hollowness of all the praises which were ringing in His ears! He knew that they who shouted hosanna today would, before many suns had risen, cry, Crucify Him! Crucify Him! He knew that His joyous entrance into Jerusalem would be followed by a mournful procession out of it when they would take Him to the Cross that He might die.

He saw amid all the effervescence of the moment the small residue of sincerity that there was in it and He accepted itbut He lamented the abundance of mere outward excitement which would disappear like the froth of the seaand so He stood and wept. It was a great sorrow, surely, which turned such a day of hopefulness into a season of anguish. It strikes me that all that day the Savior fasted and, if so, it is singular that He should have purposely kept for Himself a fast while others on His account held a festival! The reason why He did so, I think, is thisMark says, And now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve. And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry: and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon.

Such hunger had not come upon Him if it had not been preceded by a fast the day before. See, then, your Lord surrounded, as it were, with billows of praise in the midst of a tumultuous sea of exultation, Himself standing as a lone rock, unmoved by all the excitement around Him. Deep was the grief which could not be concealed or controlled on such a day when the sincere congratulations of His disciples, the happy songs of children and the loud hosannas of the multitude everywhere welcomed Him.

The greatness of His grief may be seen, again, by the fact that it overshadowed other very natural feelings which might have been and, perhaps, were, excited by the occasion. Our Lord stood on the brow of the hill where He could see Jerusalem before Him in all its beauty. What thoughts it awakened in Him! His memory was stronger and quicker than ours, for His mental powers were unimpaired by sin and He could remember all the great and glorious things which had been spoken of Zion, the city of God. Yet, as He remembered them all, no joy came into His soul because of the victories of David or the pomp of SolomonTemple and tower had lost all charm for Himthe joy of the earth brought no joy to Him. And at the sight of the venerable city and its holy and beautiful house He wept.

Modern travelers who have any soul in them are always moved by the sublimity of the spectacle from the Mount of Olives. Dean Stanley wrote, Nothing at Rome, Memphis, Thebes, Constantinople, or Athens can approach it in beauty or interest. And yet this is the poor, mean Jerusalem of modern timesby no means to be compared with the Jerusalem of our Saviors day! Yet the Lord Jesus says nothing about this city, Beautiful for situation, except to lament over it. If He counts the towers there and marks well her bulwarks, it is only to bemoan their total overthrow. All the memories of the past did but swell the torrent of His anguish in the foresight of her doom!

Something of admiration may have entered the Saviors holy breast, for before Him stood His Fathers house, of which He still thought so much that even though He knew it would be left desolate, yet He took pains to purge it once again of the buyers and sellers who polluted it. That Temple was built of white marble and much of it, the roof especially, covered with slabs of gold. It must have been one of the fairest objects that ever human eye rested upon as it glittered in the sun before Him. But what were those great and costly stones? What were those curious carvings to Him? His heart was saying within itself, There shall not be one stone left upon another that shall not be thrown down.

His sadness at the foresight of the citys desolation mastered His natural feeling of admiration for its present glory. His sorrow found no alleviation either in the past or the present of the citys historythe dreadful future threw a pall over all. It mastered, too, the sympathy which He usually felt for those who were about Him. He would not stop His disciples from rejoicing, though the Pharisees asked Him, but He, Himself, took no share in the joy. Usually He was the most sensitive of men to all who were around Him, sorrowing with their sorrow and joying in their joy. But on this occasion they may wave their palms and cut down branches of trees and strew them in the way and the children may shout, Hosanna, but He who was the center of it all did not enter into the feeling of the hourthey celebrateHe weeps.

More striking, still, is the fact that His grief for others prevented all apprehension for Himself. As He beheld that city, knowing that within a week He would die outside its gates, He might naturally have begun to feel the shadow of His sufferings, but no trace of such emotion is discoverable. You and I, in such a case, with the certainty of a speedy and ignominious death before us, would have been heavy about it, but Jesus was not. In all that flood of tears there was not one for His own death! The tears were all for Jerusalems doom, even as He said afterwards, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children.

It is not Woe is Me, the holy city will become an Aceldama, a field of blood by My slaughter, but, Oh, if you had known, even you, in this, your day. He grieves for others, not for Himself! Yet it must have been a very intense emotion which thus swept away, as with a torrent, everything else so that He had neither joy for joy, nor sorrow for sorrow, but His whole strength of feeling was poured forth from one sluice and ran in one channel towards the devoted city which had rejected Him and was about to put Him to death! This great sorrow of His reveals to us the Nature of our Lord. How complex is the Person of Christ! He foresaw that the city would be destroyed and though He was Divine, He wept! He knew every single event and detail of the dreadful tragedy and used words about it of special historical accuracy which bring out His prophetic Character and yet the eyes so clear in seeing the future were almost blinded with tears!

He speaks of Himself as willing and able to have averted this doom by gathering the guilty ones under His wings and thus He intimates His Godhead. While His Nature on the one side of it sees the certainty of the doom, the same Nature, from another side, laments the dread necessity! I will not say that His Godhead foresaw and His Manhood lamented, for so mysteriously is the Manhood joined to the Godhead that it makes but one Person and it were better to assert that the entire Nature of Christ lamented over Jerusalem. I have never been able to believe in an impassive God, though many theologians lay it down as an axiom that God

cannot suffer. It seems to me that He can do or endure anything He wills to do or endure and I, for one, cannot see that there is any special glorifying of God in the notion that He is incapable in any direction whatever. We can only speak of Him after the manner of men and after that manner He speaks of Himself and, therefore, there is no wrong in so doing.

It brings the great Father nearer when we see Him lamenting the wanderings of His children and joying in their penitent return. What but sorrow can be meant by such expressions as these? How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, Israel? How shall I make you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me; My repentings are kindled together. 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 masters crib: but Israel does not know, My people do not consider. Are these the utterances of an unfeeling God? I believe it is the Christ, the entire Christ that both foretells the doom of Jerusalem and laments it.

Some have even been staggered at the statement that Jesus wept. Certain of the early Christians, I am sorry to say, even went the length of striking the passage out of the Gospel because they thought that weeping would dishonor their Lord. They ought to have had more reverence for the Inspired Word and a truer knowledge of their Master and never to have wished to obliterate a record which reflects the highest honor upon mans Redeemer. Our Lords lament gives us an insight into the great tenderness of His CharacterHe is so tender that He not only weeps while weeping would be of no usebut He laments when lamentation must be fruitless! He reminds me of a judge who, having before been a friend by warning, persuading, pleading with the prisoner, at last has the unutterable pain of condemning himhe puts on the black cap and, with many a sigh and tear, pronounces sentencefeeling the dreadful nature of the occasion far more than the criminal at the bar.

He is overcome with emotion while he declares that the condemned must be taken to the place from where he came and there die a felons death. Oh the tender heart of Christ, that when it comes to pronouncing the inevitable sentence, Your house is left unto you desolate, yet He cannot utter the righteous words without lamentation! In this our Lord reveals the very heart of God! Did He not say, He that has seen Me has seen the Father? Here, then, you see the Father, Himself, even He who said of old, 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. The doom must be pronounced, for infinite Justice demands it, but Mercy laments what she was not permitted to prevent.   
Tears fall amid the thunders and though the doom is sealed by obstinate impenitence, yet judgment is evidently strange work to the patient Judge. This anguish showed how dreadful was the sentence, for what could stir the Savior so if the doom of sinners is a small affair? If the doom of guilt is such a trifle as some dream, I understand not why these tears! The whole Nature of Christ is convulsed as He thinks, first of Jerusalem plowed as a field and her children slaughtered till their blood runs in rivers of gore and, next, as He beholds the doom of the ungodly who must be driven from His Presence and from the Glory of His power to be the awful witnesses of Divine Justice and of Gods hatred of evil. Thus standing on the brow of Olivet, the weeping Son of Man reveals to us the heart of Godslow to anger, of great mercy, waiting to be gracious and tardy in executing His wrath.

For a practical lesson, we may remark that this weeping of the Savior should much encourage men to trust Him. Those who desire His salvation may approach Him without hesitation, for His tears prove His hearty desires for our good. When a man who is not given to sentimental tears, as some effeminate beings are, is seen to weep, we are convinced of his sincerity. When a strong man is passionately convulsed from head to foot and pours out lamentations, you feel that he is in downright earnest and if that earnestness is manifested on your behalf you can commit yourself to him. Oh, weeping Sinner, fear not to come to a weeping Savior! If you will not come to Jesus, it grieves Him! That you have not come long ago has wrung His heart! That you are still away from Him is His daily sorrowcome, then, to Him without delay!

Let His tears banish your fears, yes, He gives you better encouragement than tears, for He has shed for sinners not drops from His eyes, alone, but from His heart! He died that sinners who believe in Him might live! His whole body was covered with bloody sweat when He agonized for you how can you doubt His readiness to receive you? The five scars that still remain upon His blessed Person, up there at the Fathers right hand, all invite you to approach Him! These dumb mouths most eloquently entreat you to draw near and trust in Him whom God has set forth as the Propitiation for sin! How shall He that wept and bled and died for sinners repulse a sinner who comes to Him at His bidding? Oh, come, come, come, I pray you, even now, to the weeping sinners Friend.

This, too, I think is an admonishment to Christian workers. Some of us, long ago, came to Jesus and we now occupy ourselves with endeavoring to bring others to Him. In this blessed work our Lord instructs us by His example. Brothers and Sisters, if we would have others come to Jesus we must be like Jesus in tenderness. We must be meek, lowly, gentle and sympathetic and we must be moved to deep emotion at the thought that any should perish. Never let us speak harshly of the doom of the wicked. Never let us speak flippantly, or without holy griefthe loss of Heaven and the endurance of Hell must always be themes for tears! That men should live without Christ is grief enoughbut that they should DIE without Christ is an overwhelming horror which should grind our hearts to powder before God and make us fall on our faces and cry, O God, have mercy upon them and save them, for Your Grace and for Your loves sake.

The deepest tenderness, it may be, some of us have yet to learn. Perhaps we are passing through a school in which we shall be taught it and if we do but learn it we need not care how severe the instructive discipline may be. We ought not to look upon this city of London without tears, nor even upon a single sinner without sorrow. We must preach tenderly and teach tenderly if we would win souls. We are not to weep continually, for even Jesus did not do that, yet are we always to feel a tender love towards men so that we would be ready to die for them if we might but save them from the wrath to come and bring them into the haven of the Saviors rest!

Let me add that I think the lament of Jesus should instruct all those who would now come to Him as to the manner of their approach. While I appealed to you, just now, were there any who said, I would gladly come to Jesus, but how shall I come? The answer iscome with sorrow and with prayer, even as it is written, they shall come with weeping and with supplications will I lead them. As Jesus meets you, so meet Him. He shows you in what fashion to return, in what array to draw near to your Redeemer, for He comes to you clothed in no robes but those of mourning, adorned with no jewels but the pearls of His tears. Come to Him in the garments of humiliation, mourning for your sin. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Penitential sorrow works life into men. Only come to Jesus and tell Him you have sinned and are ashamed and gladly would cease to do evil and learn to do well. Come in all your misery and degradation, in all your consciousness of your Hell-deservedness. Come in sorrow to the Man of Sorrows who is even now on the road to meet you! He has said, Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out, and He will not forfeit His Word. God bless these feeble words concerning the inner emotions of my Lord and may the Holy Spirit again rest upon us while we further pursue the subject into another field.

II. We are now to consider OUR LORDS VERBAL LAMENTATIONS. These are recorded in the following wordsOh that you had known, even you, at least in this, your day, the things which belong unto your peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. First, notice He laments over the fault by which they perishedOh that you had known. Ignorance, willful ignorance, was their ruin. Oh that you had known. They did not know what they might have knownwhat they ought to have knownthey did not know their God. The ox knows his owner and the ass his masters crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.

They knew not God! They knew not Gods only Son! They knew not Him who came in mercy to them with nothing but love upon His lips! Oh, but this is the pity, that the Light of God is come into the world and men will not have it, but love darkness rather than Light. Alas, I fear that some of my hearers live in the Light and will not see. There are none so deaf as those that will not hear and none so blind as those that will not seeand yet there are such in all Christian congregationswho do not know and will not know. God says, Oh that you had hearkened to My Commandments, then had your peace been as a river and your righteousness as the waves of the sea. Our Lord lamented over the inhabitants of Jerusalem because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord they would have none of His counselthey despised His reproof.

Willful ignorance led to obstinate unbelief. They chose to die in the dark rather than accept the Light of the Son of God! The Lord laments the bliss which they had lost, the peace which could not be theirs, Oh that you had known the things that belong unto your peace. The name of that city was, as we know, Jerusalem, which, being interpreted, signifies a vision of peace. They that looked upon it saw before them a vision of peace. But, alas, Jerusalem had lost its salem, or peace, and become only a vision because she did not know and would not know her God! Oh men and women that know not God, you have lost peace! Even now you are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt!

There is no peace, says my God, unto the wicked. Oh what joys you might have had! The delights of pardoned sin, the bliss of conscious safety, the joy of communion with Godthe rapture of fellowship with Christ Jesus, the heavenly expectation of infinite Gloryall might have been yours! But you have put them away from you. The Lord says of you, as of Israel of old, O that My people had hearkened unto Me and Israel had walked in My ways! I would soon have subdued their enemies and turned My hand upon their adversaries. God would have revealed to you, by His Spirit, brighter things than eyes have seen and sweeter joys than ears have heardfor if you had been willing and obedient you would have eaten the fat of the land of His promises! You are losers! You are awful losers by not being reconciled to God and you will be worse losers yet, for that false peace which now stands in the place of true peace and beguiles and fascinates you will depart like the mirage of the desert and leave you on the arid sands of despair to seek rest and find it not!

Soon shall a terrible sound be in your ears of the approaching vengeance of God and there shall be for you no place of refuge. When the Lord thought of what they had lost, He cried, Oh that you had known! I feel ashamed to repeat His Words because I cannot repeat them in the tone He used. Oh, to hear Jesus say these words! I think it might melt a heart of stone! But no, I am mistaken, even that would not do it, for those who did hear Him were not melted nor reclaimed, but went on their way to their doom as they had done before! How hardened are the men who can trample on a Redeemers tears! What wonder that they find a Hell where not a drop of water can ever cool their parched tongues tormented in the flames! If men are resolved to be damned, it is evident that the tears of the best, the most perfect of men cannot stop them! Woe is me! This is deeper cause for tears than all else besides, that men should be so desperately set on mischief that nothing but Omnipotence will stop them from eternal suicide!

But our Lord also lamented over they who had lost peace. Observe that He saysOh that you had known, even you. You are Jerusalem, the favored city. It is little that Egypt did not know, that Tyre and Sidon did not know, but that you should not know! Ah, Friends, if Jesus were here this morning, He might weep over some of you and sayOh that you had known, even you. You were a lovely child! Even in your earliest days you were fond of everything good and gracious! You were taken to the place of worship and sat on your mothers knee, pleased to be there. Do you remember the ministers name that you used to lisp with delight, the texts you repeated and the hymns you sang? You grew up to be a lad right full of promise and all felt sure that you would be a Christian.

What exhortations your father, who is now in Heaven, gave you! And she that bore you and loved you till she passed away! How she prayed and pleaded for you! Some of you have been sitting here, or in some other place where Christ is preached, for a very long time and you have often been very near to the Kingdom and yet you are not in it. You have come right up to the edge of the border, but you have not crossed the line. You are not far from the Kingdom of God, but you lack one thingthe one essential point of decision for ChristOh that you had known, even you! You are always ready to help the cause of God with your purse, for you take an interest in every good workyou cannot bear blasphemy or infidelityand yet you are not saved!

There are a thousand things that are hopeful about you, but there is one thing which dampens our hope, for you always procrastinate and know not how to use your present opportunity. Jesus bids you use this your day, but you linger and delay. Today is Gods accepted time! Postpone no longer the hour of decision! Alas that you should perish! Shall the child of such a mother be lost? Shall the son of such a father be driven down to Hell? I cannot bear it! God have mercy on you, sons and daughters of Christian parents! You that have been enriched with Christian privileges, why will you die? Young man, so promising but yet so undecided, it makes the Savior, Himself, weep that you, even you, should still refuse to know the things that make for your peace!

Our Lord wept because of the opportunity which they had neglected. He said, At least in this, your day. It was such a favored daythey had been warned by holy men, but now they had the Son of God, Himself, to preach to them! It was a day of miracles of mercy, a day of the unveiling of Gospel Grace! And yet they would not have Christ though He had come so near to them and it was a day of merciful visitation such as other nations had not known. Perhaps today, also, may be a day of visitation for some of you. Shall we have to lament, Oh that you had known, even you, at least in this, your dayon this Lords-Day, this day of power, this day of the Spirit? Oh, by His Grace, you now weep and I perceive you feel some tender touches of the Spirits power! Do not resist Him and cause this day, also, to pass away unimproved!

The harvest is passed, the summer is ended and you are not saved. And has the autumn closed and shall the winter come and go and shall these days in which the Spirit visits men all depart till God shall declare that it does not become the dignity of His Spirit to always strive with flesh and, therefore, He shall cease His operations and leave men to their own devices? Oh, souls, I pray you think of Christ weeping because revival days and Sundays are being wasted by you! Do not, in these best of days, commit the worst of sins by still refusing to receive the Gospel of God! The Lord Jesus mourned, again, because He saw the blindness which had stolen over them. They had shut their eyes so fast that now they could not seetheir ears which they had stopped had become dull and heavytheir hearts which they had hardened had waxen gross so that they could not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor feel in their hearts, nor be converted that He should heal them.

Why, the Truth of God was as plain as the sun in the heavens and yet they could not see it! And so is the Gospel at this hour to many of you and yet you perceive it not. There is nothing plainer than the plan of salvation by looking unto Jesus and yet many men have gone on so long resisting the sweetness and Light of the Spirit of God that they cannot, now, see the Lord Jesus who is as the sun in the heavens! The kindest friends have put the Gospel before them in a way that has enlightened others, but it has not affected them. They still say, I cannot see it! O you blind ones, take heed lest this has come upon you, Behold, you despisers and wonder and perish. Christ groans because the timings which belonged to the peace of Jerusalem were hid from their eyes as a punishment for refusing to see.

Lastly, we know that the great floodgates of Christs grief were pulled up because of the ruin which He foresaw. It is worth any mans while to read the story of the destruction of Jerusalem as it is told by Josephusit is the most harrowing of all records written by human pen! It remains the tragedy of tragedies! There never was and there never will be anything comparable to it. The people died of famine and of pestilence and fell by thousands beneath the swords of their own countrymen. Women devoured the flesh of their own children and men raged against each other with the fury of beasts. All ills seemed to meet in that doomed city! It was filled within with horrors and surrounded without by terrors. There was no escape, neither would the frenzied people accept mercy.

The city itself was the banqueting hall of death. Josephus says, All hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. Then did the famine widen its progress and devour the people by whole houses and families. The upper rooms were full of women and infants that were dying by famine and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged. The children, also, and the young men wandered about the market places like shadows, all swelled with the famine and fell down dead wherever their misery seized them. For a time the dead were buried, but afterwards, when they could not do that, they had them cast down from the wall into the valleys beneath. When Titus, on going his rounds along these valleys, saw them full of dead bodies and the thick putrefaction running about them, he gave a groan and, spreading out his hands to Heaven, called God to witness this was not his doing.

There is nothing in history to exceed this horror! But even this is nothing compared with the destruction of a soul. A man might look with complacency upon a dying body if he knew that within it was a soul that would live eternally in bliss and cause the body to rise again to equal joy. But for a soul to die is a catastrophe so terrible that the heavens might be clothed with sackcloth for its funeral! There is a death which never ends! The separation of the soul from Godwhich is the most complete of all deaths! The separation of the soul from the body is but, as it were, a prelude and type of the far more dreadful deaththe separation of the soul from God. Banished from hope, existing but not living and that forever! What a condition this must be!

I shall draw no picture. Words fail but, oh, my Hearers, shall it be that anyone among you shall always know the meaning of the Saviors words These shall go away into everlasting punishment? Will it ever be your lot to hear Him sayyou who hear me this day, I meanDepart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels? If we could mark any here to whom this doom will happen, we might make a ring around them and bring them home tearing our garments and tearing our hair, for it would be a far greater grief than if we knew that they would die by the sword or by famine in a foreign land! All ills are trifles compared with the second death!

Bear with me just a moment while, in conclusion, I set forth our Saviors grief as it expressed itself in other words, for those other words may help us to fresh light. You remember the passage in the 23rd of Matthew which I read in your hearing, where the Lord said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the Prophets and stone them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you would not!? Do you see His Grace and grief? These people killed the Prophets and yet the Lord of Prophets would have gathered them! His love had gone so far that even Prophet-killers He would have gathered! Is not this amazing that there should be Grace enough in Christ to gather adulterers, thieves, liars and to forgive and change them and yet they will not be gathered? That Jesus should be willing, even, to gather such base ones into a place of salvation and yet should be refused?

The pith of it lies in thisHow often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you would not. See, here, the case stands thusI would, but you would not. This is a grief to love. If it had been a fact that Christ would not, then I could not understand His tears, but when He says I would, but you would not, then I see the deep reason of His anguish! The failure of will is in you that perish, not in Christ who cries, I would, but you would not. Yes and He adds, How often would I. Not once was He in a merciful mood and pitiful to sinners for that time, alone, but He cries, How often would I have gathered.

Every Prophet that had come to them had indicated an opportunity for their being gathered and every time that Jesus preached there was a door set open for their salvation, but they would not be gathered and so He foretells their fate in these wordsYour house shall be left unto you desolate. Here is a painful sentence. Set the two words in contrast Gathered, that is what you might have been! Desolate, that is what you shall beand Jesus weeps because of it! Gatheredit is such a beautiful picture! You see the little chicks fleeing from danger when they hear the cluck of the mother hen. They gather together and they come under her wings.

Did you ever hear that little, pretty cry they make when they are all together with their heads buried in the feathers? How warm and comfortable they are! This is where you might have been, gathered under the warm breast of the eternal God, feeling His love with the rest of the peoplejoying and rejoicing in a communion of complete security! But inasmuch as you would not be gathered, see what you will bedesolate, without a friend, without a helper. Then you will call to the saints, but they will not be able to help you. Say to them, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone outbut they must refuse you. Unto which of the holy ones will you turn? What angel will have pity upon you? Each cherub waves his fiery sword to keep you from the gate of Paradise. There is no help for you in God when once you die without Him! No help for you anywhere.

Desolate! Desolate! Desolate! Because you would not be gathered! Well does the tender Savior weep over men since they will perversely choose such a doom! I do not feel as if I should close in gloom. I must flash before you a brighter light, though it is but for the last minute. The day hastens on when Christ will come a second time and then He shall behold a new Jerusalem, a spiritual Jerusalem, built by Divine hands. The foundations thereof are of jewels and the gates thereof are of pearl. How He will rejoice over it! He shall rest in His love and He shall rejoice over it with singing! He will shed no tears, then, but He will see in the Jerusalem from above the travail of His soul and He shall be satisfied. When Zion shall be built up, the Lord shall appear in His Glory and the marriage of the Lamb will have come.

Meanwhile, if any one of you who are not yet saved will come to Jesus, He will rejoice over you, for He takes pleasure in the stones of Zion and favors the dust, there, and if you are as little as Zions dust and as mean as her rubbish, He will rejoice over you! It is written that, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. Now, angels stand in the Presence of the Lord Jesus and there is joy in His heart over a single penitent! If only one sinner shall repent because of this sermon, my Lord will rejoice over Him! I, His servant, am, in my measure, intensely glad when a soul repents, but He shall have the chief joy, for His is the chief love!

Who will now come to Jesus? Would to God it might be the beloved son of a godly mother! Would to God it might be you, my long hesitating Hearer, for years a hearer but not a doer of the Word. May the Holy Spirit decide you at this very moment! Amen.

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DEPARTED SAINTS YET LIVING

NO. 1863

SUGGESTED BY THE DECEASE OF THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 4, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him. Luke 20:37, 38.**

DURING the past week, the Church of God and the world at large have sustained a very serious loss. In the taking home to Himself by our gracious lord, the Earl of Shaftesbury, we have, in my judgement, lost the best man of the age. I do not know whom I should place second, but I certainly should put him firstfar beyond all other servants of God within my knowledgefor usefulness and influence. He was a man most true in his personal piety, as I know from having enjoyed his private friendship. He was a man most firm in his faith in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; a man intensely active in the cause of God and the Truth of God. Take him whichever way you please, he was admirable. He was faithful to God in all His house, fulfilling both the first and second commands of the Law in fervent love to God and hearty love to man. He occupied his high position with singleness of purpose and immovable steadfastnesswhere shall we find his equal? If it is not possible that he was absolutely perfect, it is equally impossible for me to mention a single fault, for I saw none. He exhibited Scriptural perfection, inasmuch as he was sincere, true and consecrated.

Those things which have been regarded as faults in him by the loose thinkers of this age are prime virtues in my esteem. They called him narrowand in this they bear unconscious testimony to his loyalty to the Truth of God. I rejoiced greatly in his integrity, his fearlessness, his adherence to principle in a day when the Revelation of God is questioned, the Gospel explained away and human thought set up as the idol of the hour. He felt that there was a vital and eternal difference between the Truth of God and error and, consequently, he did not act or talk as if there was much to be said on either side and, therefore, no one could be quite sure. We shall not know for many a year how much we miss in missing him; how great an anchor he was to this drifting generation and how great a stimulus he was to every movement for the benefit of the poor!

Both man and beast may unite in mourning him! He was the friend of every living thing. He lived for the oppressed; he lived for London; he lived for the nation and he lived, still more, for God! He has finished his course and though we do not lay him to sleep in the grave with the sorrow of those that have no hope, yet we cannot but mourn that a great man and a prince has fallen this day in Israel! Surely the righteous are taken away from the evil to come and we are left to struggle on under increasing difficulties.

It must always be so. The godly must die, even as others. Though our life is perfectly consecrated, yet it cannot forever be continued in this world. It is appointed unto men once, to die, and that appointment stands. We expect the present rule to last till He shall come who shall destroy the last enemy. We are not troubled with Sadducean doubts. To us, seeing that Christ rose from the dead, it is a matter of certainty that all His followers must rise, also. And seeing that Jesus always lived, it is equally a matter of certainty to us that all the saints are still living, for He has said, Because I live, you shall live, also. Yet, if no infidelity is permitted to creep into our brain and disturb our belief, it may penetrate into our heart and cause us great sadness. We who believe in Jesus should rise into an atmosphere more clear and warm than that of the sepulcher, for the Lord Jesus has abolished death and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel.

We are not now sitting in the shadow of death, for eternal light has sprung up! Children of God, it is in the highest degree proper that you should think of things as your Father thinks of themand He says that all live unto God. Let us correct our phraseology by that of Scripture, and speak of departed saints as Divine Inspiration speaks of them! Then shall we come back to the simple childs talk which Wordsworth so sweetly turned into rhymeMaster, we are seven, and in our family we shall number brothers, sisters and friends, whose bodies lie in the churchyard and shall speak of those who have crossed the border and passed within the veil as still our own! Like Jesus, we shall say, Our friend Lazarus sleeps. Like Paul, we shall speak of them as absent from the body but present with the Lord and regard them as part and parcel of the one family in Heaven and earth!

Our text was fashioned in a place which has the air of death, burial and resurrection about it. The voice came to Moses in the desert. This was a strange place for Mosesthe living, active, well-instructed mind of Moses, mighty in all the wisdom of Egypt and full of noble thoughts concerning the living Godwas buried in a desert. It is singular to see the foremost mind of the age in the remotest part of the desert hidden away among sheep! He who was a born king is, here, feeding a flock. It is death to Moses. Rest assured that Moses cannot be kept in this living tombhe must rise to life and leadership. While there is a God and a Providence, Moses cannot continue in obscurity. There are certainties wrapped up in him which cannot fail. A man need not be a Prophet to stand at Horeb and prognosticate that Moses will emerge from the desert and shake Egypt by his resurrection!

While Moses is in the desert, he is thinking about another case of death, burial and resurrection, namely, Israel in Egypt. The people of God, the favored nation of Jehovah with whom He had entered into Covenant, saying, I will be their God and they shall be My peoplethese were in Egypt, ground down by relentless oppression, begrimed with brick dust and black and blue with the blows of taskmasters. It has come to this, that they are compelled to cast their male children into the river and so to be the destroyers of their own race! The children of Israel have become a herd of slaves, yet they are Gods elect people, Gods favored family! It does not require a Prophet to declare that this death in Egypt cannot lastthe elect nation must live and rise and go forth free to serve the Lord! No, Israel, you shall never perish! The voice must yet be heard Thus says the Lord, Let My people go, that they may serve Me!

And so, while Moses in the desert is thinking of Israel in Egypt, he sees a bush, and that bush is all ablaze. An ordinary bush upon the heath needs only to be touched with a match and, in one moment, there is a puff of flame and then all is overnothing is left but a trace of ashes. Yet here was an extraordinary thinga bush that continued to burn and was not consumed! Here was life in the midst of death, continuance in the midst of destruction! This was an emblem of God abiding with a people and yet suffering them to liveor of the fires of affliction being rendered harmless to the children of God. He who then spoke to Moses was the God of Life, the God who could sustain in the midst of destruction! He was the God who could preserve even a bush from being devoured by the intense fury of flame! Said I not truly that the surroundings of Moses and the bush all favor a display of life in death and resurrection out of death?

Now we come to the central matter. Out of the midst of the bush there came a Voice, a mysterious and Divine Voice which said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. From this Voice our Divine Lord teaches us to gather this factthat Gods people live when they appear to have been long deadfor He who cannot be the God of the dead, or non-existent, still avows Himself to be the God of the longburied Patriarchs! Our Lord proved from that utterance at the bush, the continued life of the Lords chosen and also their resurrectionhow did He do this?

I. We will not go straight to the answer, but we will beat about the bush a little, that the reasoning may the more gently enter our minds. I would say, first, that in these words we have A GLORIOUS RELATIONSHIP DECLARED. Moses called the Lord, The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

The glorious Lord did, at the bush, as good as say, These three men have chosen Me to be their God. So they hadthrough the Grace of God they had deliberately chosen to part with their natural kindred in the country of the Chaldees and to journey to a land of which they knew nothing except that God had promised that they should afterwards receive it for an inheritance. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were three very different characters, yet this was common to the threethat they believed God and took Him to be their God, alone. They nestled in the bosom of Jehovah while the rest of the world went after their idols. In all their troubles, they flew to Jehovah; for the supply of all their needs they resorted to Him, alone. They were men who had, through Divine Grace, deliberately attached themselves unto Jehovah, the Most High, throughout the whole of their lives.

It is a sublime sight to see a man trust in God as Abraham didand obey the Lord fully as he did in the matter of Isaac, when he accounted God to be able to raise him up, even from the dead. Surely there must be everlasting life in a being who could thus confide in Jehovah! I call you to admire the fact that God called the Patriarchs into the noble position of following the Lord fully, of fixed and settled choice. Being men of like passions with ourselves, they nevertheless cast in their lot with the Lord and for His sake preferred the life of strangers and pilgrims on the earth to the comforts of settled residence in Ur of the Chaldees and to the sinful pleasures of Canaan. We, also, take this God to be our God, even the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. There is a nobility about the choosers of the true God which will surely secure them from annihilation.

Next, these three men had learned to commune with God. How wondrously had Abraham spoken with God! Full many a spot was consecrated as the place where he stood before the Lord. Isaac also walked in the fields at eventide and, doubtless, there entered into secret fellowship with God. The Lord also appeared unto him at night and led him to build an altar and call upon the name of Jehovah. The good old man, even in his blindness, found solace in communion with the Lord God Almighty. Jacob, also, was favored with heavenly visitations. We can never forget that mystic dream at Bethel, nor the wrestling at Jabbok, nor the many times when he turned to the God of his father Abraham and his father Isaacand God spoke with him as a man speaks with his friend! It is a wonderful thing that the Lord should thus commune with men. He does not thus show Himself to the beasts which perish. He does not thus reveal Himself to the lifeless stones of the field. Those are strangely honored beings with whom God enters into close communion as He did with these three men! I argue from it that these beings cannot dissolve into a handful of dust and cease to be. Can those eyes cease to be which have seen the Lord? Can these souls perish which have conversed with the Eternal? We think not! And, just now, I ask you only to meditate upon the glories to which the Patriarchs were lifted up when they were permitted to be the Friends of God.

What was still more notable, the Lord entered into Covenant with them. He made a Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob which He remembered, saying, Surely, blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you. You know how the Lord swore to give unto the seed of Abraham a goodly heritage, a land that flowed with milk and honey. Now, it is a wonderful thing that God should enter into compact with man. Does He make an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, with mere insects of an hour? Especially, would He give His Son Jesus to die to seal the everlasting Covenant by His hearts blood with mere shadows who are but for a little time and then cease to be? I am sure it is not so. If God makes men capable of entering into an everlasting Covenant with Himself, there lies within that fact the clear suggestion that He imparts to them an existence which is not for today and tomorrow, but for eternity! Still, I wish you mainly to regard the Glory into which manhood is lifted up when God enters into gracious Covenant with it.

Moreover, to go further, these men were not only in Covenant with God, but they had lived in accordance with that Covenant. I do not mean that they had lived perfectly in accord with it, but that the main strain of their lives was in conformity with their Covenant relationship to God. For the sake of that Covenant, Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees and dwelt no longer in the land of Haran, but became a sojourner with God in the land of Canaan. For the sake of this, he sent away his firstborn after the flesh, seeing it was said, In Isaac shall your seed be called. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. These faithful men had respect to the recompense of the reward and, therefore, they were not mindful of the country from where they came out, neither sought opportunity to return.

Jacob, the most faulty of the three, greatly as he erred in his conduct to his brother Esau, was evidently actuated by an intense faith in the Covenant birthright so that he ventured all things to obtain it. In his old age and death, he was anxious not to be confused with the Egyptians, or separated from the chosen household and, therefore, he said unto Joseph, But I will lie with my fathers, and you shall carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. This he made Joseph swear, for he must make sure of it. He was aiming at the promise, despite the errors that he committed in so doing. Now, does God enter into Covenant with men and help men to live in accordance with that Covenant and, after all, shall they miss the blessing? Shall it end in nothing? Hiding beneath the shadow of Gods wings, shall they, after all, perish? It cannot be! They must live to whom God is God.

For this was the Covenant, that they should have God to be their God and that they should be Gods people. O Brothers and Sisters, I do not know how to speak on such a blessing as this, though I live in the daily enjoyment of it! This God is our God. All that the Lord is and all that He can do, He has given over to us, to be used on our behalfthe fullness of His Grace and Truth, the infinity of His Love, the Omnipotence of His Power, the Infallibility of His Wisdomall, all shall be used on our behalf! The Lord has given Himself over to His people to be their inheritance and, on the other hand, we, poor weak feeble creatures as we are, are taken to be the peculiar treasure of the living God! They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels. The Lords portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. We are Gods heritage, we are Gods jewels, we are Gods children, we are dear to Him as the apple of His eye! We are to Him as the signet upon His hand and the crown upon His head! He cannot have chosen for His portion a mass of corruption, or a handful of brown dustyet that is what the body comes to in death. He cannot have chosen for His heritage that which will melt back into mother earth and be no more foundthis cannot be!

The Covenant has within it the sure guarantee of eternal life. Oh what an honor it is that God should even say to you and to meI will be your God and you shall be My people. Beyond the angels, beyond Heaven, beyond all My other creatures, I reserve you unto Myself. I have loved you with an everlasting love. I will rest in My love to you. I will rejoice over you with singing. In this the Lord has highly exalted His covenanted ones and raised them to great nearness to Himselfand thus to glory and honor. What has God worked? What is man that God is thus mindful of him, or the son of man that He thus visits him? Angels are nowhere as compared with men, yes, cherubim with all their burning bliss and consecrated ardor cannot match with men who are in Covenant with God! Blessed above all other beings are those who have Jehovah to be their God and who are, themselves, the Lords choice, care and delight! Each one of these points, if well thought out, will go to strengthen our belief that the saints must live, must live forever and are, at this moment, living unto God.

II. We now come to that matter more distinctly under our second headhere is ETERNAL LIFE IMPLIED, for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

It is implied, first, in the very fact of the Covenant of Grace. As I have asked beforeDoes the eternal God covenant with creatures that shall live only to threescore years and 10 and then shall go out like a candle-snuff? How can He be a God to them? I understand how He can be a helper and a friend to men of brief existence, but I see not how He can be a God. Must they not partake in His eternity if it is truly said, I will be your God? How can the Lord be an eternal blessing to an ending being? He has power and He will give me sufficient strength; He has wisdom and He will give me as much of His wisdom as I am capable of receiving. Must He not, also, cause me to partake of His immortality? How is He a God to me if He suffers me to be blotted out of existence? When David said in dying, Yet has He made with me an everlasting Covenant, his comfort lay in his belief that he should live in the everlasting age to enjoy the fruit of that Covenant. How could there be an everlasting Covenant with a creature who would cease to exist?

But next, this Covenant was made up of promises of a very peculiar order for, in very deed, the Covenant that God made with Abraham was not altogether, or even mainly, concerning things temporal. It was not only the land of Canaan of which the Lord spoke to Abraham, but the Patriarchs declared plainly that they desired a better, that is, an heavenly country (Heb. 11:16). Even when they were in Canaan, they were still looking for a countryand the city promised to them was not Jerusalem for, according to Paul in the 11th of the Hebrews, they still were looking for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They did not find, in their earthly lives, the complete fulfillment of the Covenant, for they received not the promises, but saw them afar off and were persuaded of them. The temporal blessings which God gave to them were not their expected portionthey took hold upon invisible realities and lived in expectation of them!

They were evidently actuated by faith in something spiritual, something everlasting and they believed that the Covenant which God had made with them concerned such things. I have not the time to go into this subject. You get it more fully explained to you in the Epistle to the Hebrewsbut so it was, that the Covenant blessings were of an order and a class that could not be compassed within the space of this present mortal lifethe outlook of Covenant promises was towards the boundless sea of eternity. Now, if the Lord made a Covenant with them concerning eternal blessings, these saints must live to enjoy those blessings. God did not promise endless blessings to the creatures of a day.

More especially, Beloved, it is to be remembered that for the sake of these eternal things, the Patriarchs had given up transient enjoyments. Abraham might have been a quiet prince in his own country, living in comfort, but, for the sake of the spiritual blessing, he left Chaldea and came to wander in the pastures of Canaanin the midst of enemiesand to dwell in tents in the midst of discomforts. Isaac and Jacob were heirs with him, also, of the same promises, but they entered not into the pursuits of the peoplethey dwelt alone and were not numbered among the nations. Like Moses, to whom God spoke, they, counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

They left kith and kin and all the advantages of settled civilized life to be rangers of the desert, exiles from their fatherland. They were the very types and models of those who have no abiding city here and, therefore, for certain, though they died in hope, not having received the promise, we cannot believe that God deceived them! Their God was no mocker of them and, therefore, they must live after death! They had lived in this poor life for something not seen as yet and, if there is no such thing and no future life, they had been duped and mislead into a mistaken self-denial. If there is no life to come, the best philosophy is that which says, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Since these men put this life in pawn for the next, they were sadly mistaken if there is no such life. Do you not see the force of our Saviors reasoning?God, who has led His people to abandon the present for the futuremust justify their choice.

Besides, the Lord had staked His honor and His reputation upon these mens lives. Do you want to know, says He, who I am? I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. If you want to know how I deal with My servants, go and look at the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. My Brothers and Sisters, as far as the earthly lives of the Patriarchs can be written in human records, they are certainly full of Gods loving kindnessbut still, there is nothing so remarkably joyous and majestic about them from a natural point of view as to make the Lords dealings with them appear to be especially wonderful. Others who did not fear God have been as rich, powerful and honorable as they. Especially is the life of Jacob plowed and cross-plowed with affliction and trial! He spoke the truth when he summed up his life in the words, Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.

Does the Lord intend us to judge of His goodness to His servants from the written life of Jacob? Or from the career of any one of His servants? The judgement must include the ages of an endless blessedness! This life is but the brief preface to the volume of our history! It is but the rough border, the selvage of the rich cloth of our being! These rippling streams of life come not to an end, but flow into the endless, shoreless ocean of bliss! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have long been enjoying happiness and shall enjoy it throughout eternity! God is not ashamed to be called their God if you judge of the whole of their beingHe would not have spoken thus if the visible were all and there were no future to counterbalance the tribulations of this mortal life! God is not the God of the short-lived who are so speedily deadHe is the living God of an immortal race whose present is but a dark passage into a bright future which can never end!

Yet further, to bring out the meaning here, God cannot be the God of the non-existent. The supposition is too absurd! Our Savior does not argue about it, but He says so most peremptorily! God is not the God of the deadthat cannot be! If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are reduced to a handful of ashes, God cannot be, at this moment, their God. We cannot take a dead object to be our God, neither can Jehovah be a God to lifeless clay. God is not the God of putrefaction and annihilation! God is not the God of that which has ceased to be! We have but to put the idea into words to make it dissolve before the glance of reason. A living God is the God of living menand Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still alive!

This even goes far to show that the bodies of these saints shall yet live. God reckons His covenanted ones to be alive. He says, The dead are raised. He reckons them to be raised and, as He reckons nothing falsely, it is said by way of anticipation, Your dead men shall live. Inasmuch as a portion of these chosen ones is still in the earth, God, who reckons things that are not, as though they were, looks upon their bodies as possessing life because they are to possess life so soon. God is not only the God of Abrahams soul, but of Abraham as a wholehis body, soul and spirit! God is the God of Abrahams bodywe are sure of that because the Covenant seal was set upon the flesh of Abraham. Where the doubt might be, there is the confirming seal, namely, in his mortal body. There was no seal set upon his soul, for the soul had life and could not see deathno, it was set upon his body which would dieto make sure that even it would live!

At this day we have Baptism and the Holy Supper to be seals as to the body. I have sometimes thought to myself that it were better if there were no water Baptism, seeing it has become the nest of so much superstition. And the Lords Supper, with all its blessed uses, has been so abused that one is apt to think that without outward ordinances there might be more spiritual religionbut the Lord intends that the materialism of man and of creation shall be lifted upand that the body shall be raised incorruptible and, therefore, has He given seals which touch the outward and material. The water where the body is washed and the bread and wine whereby the body is nourished, are tokens that there comes to us not only spiritual and invisible blessings, but even such as shall redeem and purify our mortal body! The grave cannot hold any portion of the covenanted ones! Eternal life is the portion of the whole man. God is the God of our entire manhoodspirit, soul and bodyand all live unto Him in their entirety. The whole of the Covenant shall be fulfilled to the whole of those with whom that Covenant was made!

This is good reasoning to those who have gone beyond mere reason and have ascended into the realm of faith. May the Holy Spirit grant unto us to be among them!

III. Thirdly, and very briefly, beloved Friends, my text not only declares glorious relationship and implies eternal life, but it also unveils somewhat scantily, but still sufficiently, what the glorious life must be! Look, then, and see the GLORIOUS LIFE UNVEILED!

It is clear that they live personally. It is not said, I am the God of the whole body of the saints in one mass. But, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. God will make His people to live individually. My mother, my father, my childeach will personally exist. God is the God of saints, as living distinct livesAbraham is Abraham, Isaac is Isaac, Jacob is Jacob! The three Patriarchs were not all melted into one common Abraham, nor Isaac into one imaginary Isaac. Neither was anyone so altered as to cease to be himself. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are all literally living as actual menand the same men as they used to be. Jacob is Jacob and not an echo of Abraham! Isaac is Isaac and not a rehearsal of Jacob. All the saints are existent in their personality, identity, distinction and idiosyncrasy.

What is more, the Patriarchs are mentioned by their names and so it is clear they are knownthey are not three anonymous bodiesbut Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Many inquire, Shall we know our friends in Heaven? Why should we not? The saints in Heaven are never spoken of in Scripture as moving about anonymouslytheir names are spoken of as written in the Book of Life. Why is this? The Apostles knew Moses and Elijah on the Mount, though they had never seen them before. I cannot forget old John Rylands answer to his wifeJohn, she said, will you know me in Heaven? Betty, he replied, I have known you well, here, and I shall not be a bigger fool in Heaven than I am nowtherefore I shall certainly know you there. That seems to be clear enough! We read in the New Testament, They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heavennot sit down with three unknown individuals in iron masks, or three impersonalities who make a part of the great pan, nor three spirits who are as exactly alike as pins made in a factorybut Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That is clear enough in the text.

That glorious life, while it is a personal and a known life, is also free from all sorrow, misery and earthly grossness. They are neither married nor given in marriage; neither shall they die any more. But they are as the angels of God. It is a life of perfect blessedness, a life of hallowed worship, a life of undivided Glory! Oh, that we were in it! Oh that we may soon reach it! Let us think of the many who are enjoying it now and of those who have attained to it during the last few days. I am sure they are at home in every golden street and fully engaged in the adoration and worship of their Lord. Those saints who have been in Glory, now, these thousands of years cannot be more blessed than the latest arrivals. Within a very short space you and I shall be among the shining ones! Some of us may spend our next Sabbath with the angels! Let us rejoice and be glad at the bare thought of it. Some of as are not doomed to live here through another winterwe shall pass beyond these autumn fogs into the golden light of the eternal summer before another Christmas day has come! Oh the joy which ought to thrill our souls at the thought of such amazing bliss!

And now, taking the whole subject together, I want to say a few familiar things about the influence which all this ought to have upon us. Concerning those that have gone before us, we gather from this whole text that they are not lost. We know where they are. Neither have they lost anything, for they are what they were and more. Abraham has about him still everything that is Abrahamic. He is still Abraham. And Isaac has everything about him that properly belongs to Isaac. And Jacob has all about him that makes him Gods Israel. These good men have lost nothing that really appertained to their individuality, nothing that made them precious in the sight of the Lord. They have infinitely gainedthey have gloriously developed! They are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob now at their bestor rather they are waiting till the trumpet of the Resurrection shall sound when their bodies also shall be united to their spiritsand then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be completely Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, world without end!

We are, by no means, deprived of our dear ones by their deaththey arethey are themselves and they are still ours. As Abraham is not lost to Isaac, nor to Jacob, nor to God, nor to himself, so are our beloved ones, by no means, lost to us. Do not let us think of them, then, as if they were lost. I know your sorrows make an excursion to the grave, to look for the deceased ones. You want to lift that coffin lid and to unwrap the shroud. Oh, do not, do not! He is not here; the real man has gone. He may be dead to you, for a while, but he lives unto God. Yes, the dead one lives! He lives unto God! Do but anticipate the passage of that little time, which is almost gone while I am speaking of it, and then your Saviors angels shall sound their golden trumpets and at the welcome noise, the grave shall open its portals and resign its captives. Your brother shall rise again. Comfort one another with these words! Shaftesbury is as much Shaftesbury as ever and even more so! We have parted with the Earl, but the saint lives! He has gone past yonder veil into the next room and there he is, before the Lord of Hosts! He has gone out of this dim, dusky, cloudy chamber into the bright, pearly light that streams from the Throne of God and of the Lamb! We have nothing to sorrow about in reference to what he is or where he is. So, too, your valued parents and beloved children and choice friendsthey are still yours!

Herein is great cause for thankfulness. Put aside your sackcloth and wear the garments of hope! Lay down the sackbut and take up the trumpet! Draw not the beloved bodies to the cemetery with dreary pomp and with black horses, but cover the coffin with sweet flowers and drape the horses with emblems of hope! It is the better birthday of the saint, yes, his truer wedding day! Is it sad to have done with sadness? Is it sorrowful to part with sorrow? No, rather, when joy begins to our friends, where Glory dwells in Immanuels land, we may in sympathy sing, as it were, a new song, and tune our harps to the melodies of the glorified!

I want you, also, to remember that the departed have not become members of another racethey have not been transferred into another family they are still men, still women, still of our dear kindred. Their names are in the same family register on earth and in Heaven. Oh, no, no! Do not dream that they are separated and exiled! They have gone to the Home countrywe are the exilesthey are Home! We are en route to the Fatherlandthey are not so far from us as we think. Sin worked to divide them from us and us from them while we were here, together, but since sin is now taken away from them, one dividing element is gone! When it is also removed from us, we shall be nearer to each other than we could have been while we were both sinful! Do not let us think of them as gone far, for we are one in Christ.

And they are not gone over to the other side in the battle. Oh, do not speak of them as dead and lying on the battle-field! They live, they live in sympathy with our Divine conflict. They have marched through the enemys country. They have fought their fight and taken possession of their inheritance. They are still on our side, though we miss them from the daily service. When you number up the hosts of God, you must not forget the godlike bands that have fought the good fight, kept the faith, and finished their course. They are in the armies of the Lord, though not at this moment resisting unto blood. The 144,000 sealed unto the Lord include in their ranks all who are with God, whether here or in Heaven

*One family we dwell in Him,   
One Church, above, beneath,   
Though now divided by the stream,   
The narrow stream of Death.*

Our sacramental host marches onward to the New Jerusalem. Certain of the legionaries have forded the dividing flood. I see them ascending the other side! The bank of the river is white with their rising companies. Lo! I hear the splash of the ranks before us as they steadily pass down into the chill stream! In deep silence we see them solemnly wading through the billows. The host is ever marching on, marching on. The much dreaded stream lies a little before usit is but a silver streak. We have come to the bank. We shudder not at the prospect! We follow the blessed footsteps of our Lord and His redeemed. We are still all one armywe are not losing our menthey are simply ascending from the long campaign to take their endless rewards at the Lords right hand!

What then? Why, then we will take up their work. If they have gone into the upper chamber to rest, we will make up their lack of service in this lower room! The work they did was so human that we will not allow a stitch to drop, but take it up where they left it and persevere in earnest. They are in Glory, but they were not glorified when they were here. The work they did was done by men of such infirmities as ours, so let us not fear to go on where they left off and perpetuate the work which they rejoiced in! There lies the plow in the furrow and the oxen are standing still, for Shamgar, the champion, is gone. Will no one lay hold of the plow handles? Will nobody urge the oxen with the goad? Young men, are you idling? Here is work for you! Are you hiding yourselves? Come forward, I pray you, in the name of the great Husbandman, and let the fields be tilled and sown with the good seed! Who will fill the gap made by death? Who will be baptized for the dead? Who will bear the banner, now that a standard bearer has fallen? I hope some consecrated voice will answer, Here am I; send me!

Now, last of all, Brothers and Sisters, we may expect the same assistance as they received who have gone before. Jehovah says that He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. But He also says, I am the God of your father. The father of Moses had the Lord to be his God! That God is the God of my father, blessed be His name! As I took the old man by his hand, yesterday, at the age of 76, I could not but rejoice in all the faithfulness of the Lord to him and to his house. He was the God of my fathers father, alsoI cannot forget how the venerable man laid his hands upon his grandchild and blessed himand the blessing is with him still. Yes, and He is the God of my children and He shall be the God of my childrens children, for He keeps Covenant to thousands of them that love Him! Therefore take courage, Brothers and Sisters! This God is your God! He is a God to you and you are a people to Him!

Act as His true servants. Live as those who are elect. If you are His choice, be choice characters! The chosen should be the best, should they not? The elect should be especially distinguished above all others by their conversation and their fervent zeal for Him that chose them. As you shall rise from among the dead because the Lord Jesus has redeemed you from among men, so stand up from among the dead and corrupt mass of this worldand be alive unto Godthrough Jesus Christ your Lord! What manner of people ought you to be who serve the living God? Since the living God has manifested Himself so wonderfully to you, ought you not to live unto Him to the utmost? God bless you for Jesus sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Exodus 3:1-10; Luke 20:27-30.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK855, 852, 814.

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JOYFUL ANTICIPATION OF THE SECOND ADVENT   
NO. 2496

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 20, 1896.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 23, 1885.

**And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near. And He spoke to them a parable, Behold this fig tree and all the trees. When they**

**are budding, you see and know, yourselves, that summer is now near. So likewise, when you see these things happening, you know that the Kingdom of God is near.   
Luke 21:28-31.**

I have already said that I conceive our Lord Jesus Christ to have regarded the destruction of Jerusalem as the beginning of the end. Although some 1800 years have rolled away since that terrible event, we, with Him, may make but small account of the interval and regard it all as one dispensation of passing away. That beautiful city was the very crown of the entire earth because God had dwelt there. It may be compared to the diamond in a ring, the jewel whose setting was the whole worldand when that jewel was destroyed and God did, as it were, grind it to powderit was a warning that the ring, itself, would, by-and-by, be crushed and consumed, for the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. The destruction of Jerusalem was, so to speak, the rolling up of the curtain on the great drama of the worlds doom. It will not fall again until all the things that we now see shall have passed away and only the things that cannot be shakenthe things of God and of eternity, which we cannot seeshall remain.

Moreover, I think that from this chapter, if we are to understand it alland it is confessedly very difficult to comprehendwe must regard the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple as being a kind of rehearsal of what is yet to be. Gods long-suffering was displayed with Israel for centuries. The rebellious tribes had ample space for repentance. They had even been carried away into captivity and, by the Lords gracious loving kindness, they had struggled back again. Yet, only changing the form of their apostasy, they continued to wander away from God. They were bent on backsliding from Jehovah even when their idols were all destroyed and the seed of Abraham had come to hate every sort of symbol and image! Yet, then, they began to set up other kinds of idols in the traditions of the fathers, and the inventions of the scribes. Thus they lost the spirit of Divine teaching in the mere letter of it and became only formalists when they ceased to be idolaters, for, mind you, the truth, if it is dead, has no more virtue in it than falsehood has.

When the Spirit of God is gone out of that which, in itself, is right, it becomes often a cover wherein a thousand evils conceal themselves. So, at last, Gods long-suffering had come to an end and, according to current tradition, there was a sound as of the moving of wings in the Holy Place at Jerusalem and it is reported that one priest, who stood to officiate at the altar, heard the solemn sentence, Let Us go hence, for God was about to leave His Temple. That Temple had already torn its veil from top to bottom for very shame at what had been done to the Lords Christand now the fabric, itself, must be consumed with fire, even in spite of the order of the Roman emperor. With all his power, he could not save it from ruin, and so completely was the city destroyed that Zion was plowed as a field and the very site of the Temple was, for many a day, a question in dispute.

Ah, my Friends, this was a picturea faint pictureof what shall be the case when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come again! Then, all external religionif it is but externalshall perish in the fire and only the spiritual and the true shall live. For, behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yes, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble and the day that comes shall burn them up, as it was, with the Temple fabric! In the day that is coming, only that shall endure upon which fire can have no power. Only that shall stand which is Gods own eternal Truth. So, then, I regard that destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple as the beginning of the end, and also as the rehearsal of what is yet to be.

The times before the destruction of Jerusalem were terrible to the last degree. If you have read Josephus, you cannot but feel your heart bleed for the poor Jews. They were utterly infatuated. They were so carried away with heroic madness that they fought against the Romans with a desperate valor after the city had been surrounded. Never upon this earth were there braver or more fanatical spirits than were those who were cooped up within those city walls. When they were weary with fighting the Romans, they turned their swords and their daggers against one another, being divided into sects and parties who hated each other with the utmost fury. Jerusalem was a cauldron, a boiling pot, seething full of all manner of evil, mischief and misery. The land was devoured before the Roman armies. Everybody seemed to be either driven from the country, or else to be left dead around the city walls. They crucified the Jews in such numbers that they left off doing it because they could find no more wood upon which to nail them! Those who were taken captive were sold for slaves till a penny was refused as their pricethey literally sold them for a pair of shoes! The precious sons of God, as the Prophet said, comparable to fine gold, were esteemed as earthen pitchers, cracked and brokenand only worthy to be thrown on the dunghill.

But all the timethe most awful time, perhaps, that any nation ever enduredthe disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were altogether unharmed! It is recorded that they fled to the little city of Pella, were quiet according to their Masters command and not a hair of their head perished. Indeed, it was to them a time of redemption, for the persecution which the Jews had carried on against them had been exceedingly cruel, but now there was a pause. The Jews miseries were so great that they had no care nor thought for the poor Christians! They, at least, were securethey looked up and lifted up their heads, for their Masters prophecy was verifiedand the full force of the curse fell upon those who had cried to Pilate, His blood be on us and on our children.

Now, dear Friends, it will be just so at the last. I am not about to enter into any prophecies of what is yet to be, but here are the Masters own wordsThere shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great Glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near.

That is my subject, dear Friends, and we will consider, first, the terrible time in which this precept is to be carried out. Look up, and lift up your heads. Secondly, the remarkable precept itself. Look up, and lift up your heads. And thirdly, the encouraging parable which is given in order to induce us to look up and lift up our heads. Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they are budding, you see and know, yourselves, that summer is now near. So likewise, when you see these things happening, you know that the Kingdom of God is near.

I. First, then, here is A TERRIBLE TIME in which we are told to look up and lift up our heads.   
It is evidently to be a time of fearful national trouble. And if such times should ever come in our daysif there should ever arrive times that are worthy to be compared with the destruction of Jerusalemhere is the Masters word to us, When you shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end will not come immediately. Should great wars occur, as they certainly will, there is nothing in them to terrify the Christian! Should they even come to your own doors, it is not for Believers in Christ ever to be the victims of a scare. Whatever may happen, what is there for them to fear? The Savior gives them this precept for a time when it will be impossible for them to carry it out unless it is by faith in HimLook up, and lift up your heads. Whatever chastisements shall befall the nations, you shall be secure in following to the full, the principles of peace that your Master has enjoined upon you.

Further, this precept is given, not only in times of fearful national trouble, but also in times of awful physical signs and wonders in the worldThere shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. It may be a season of preternatural darkness, or the solar system may be disturbed so that the stars of Heaven, which have been fixed for centuries, shall fall like unripe fruit from the trees, or as the withered leaves of autumn are scattered by the stormy blast. You know that when there is some phenomenon such as no one has ever seen before, how frightened people are! But suppose there should be visible in the heavens manifestations such as have never been seen, yet even at such times the children of God are to look up and lift up their heads! And if they should not merely be in the heavens, but if the earth, also, should shake and trembleif that which is supposed to be most stable should become most fickleyet even then we are to look up and lift up our heads.   
And if the sea and the waves thereof should roar in a manner altogether unusual, so that landsmen should hear the noise afar off, or if, being out at sea, ourselves, the waves should run mountains high and the vessel should threaten to sink to the bottom, yet this is still the precept for the worst of times that are supposableWhen these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads. Even in such a trying time as that, take up the language of the 46th Psalm and say, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth is removed, and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and are troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.   
Nature cannot rise to that height, says one. No, I know it cannot but Divine Grace can! I cannot rise to it, says one. Perhaps you cannot, but there is One who can raise you up to it, and it is He, Himself, who bids you to rise. Then, says Jesus, when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads.   
This terrible time which our Lord describes is, in addition, a time of universal alarmUpon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. You know that fear is contagiouswhen one person trembles, many begin to feel the same sort of tremor. And when all the people, wherever we shall go, at home or abroad, shall be in distresswhen everywhere the hearts of men shall seem to die within them, or turn, as it were. to stone, so that they cannot act or move, like those who guarded the tomb of Christ, when they saw Him rise, were as dead menif it should ever come to that and there should be a general panic, then you who have Christ for your Master, God for your Father, eternity for your heritage and Heaven for your homeeven then you may look up, and lift up your heads.   
You ask, perhaps, How shall we do that? You cannot do it without your Lord. With God, all things are possible. In Christ, you can do all things. Without Him you can do nothing. If you live away from your Lord and Master, in those days of terror that are yet to come, your hearts will quail for fear, and you will be like other men. If you run with them, you shall fear with them. If your strength is where their strength is, you shall be as weak as they are! But if you have learned to look up, why, even in those stormy times you shall keep to the habit of looking up! And if you have learned to lift your heads above the world, you shall keep to the habit of lifting up your heads! If your portion is in Heaven, it shall not be shaken when the earth rocks and reels to its very foundations. If your treasure is in Heaven, then your treasure shall not be lost.   
If God is with you, you can stand between the very jaws of death, or in the center of Hell, itself, and feel no fear! With Christ by your side, you may be as calm amid the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds, as your Lord, Himself, is in His Glory. He can work even this in you if you but cast yourself on Him and live wholly to Him.   
Once more, the time when we are to be thus calm and quiet, and to look up, and lift up our heads, is to be at the coming judgment. My dear Brothers and Sisters, whatever I might say to you about the calamities that are yet to come upon the earth. Whatever description I might give of wars, earthquakes and stormsif I were to make each word as black as night and each sentence as sharp as a killing swordyet could I not fully describe the final scene when the Lord, Himself, shall come in all the pomp and splendor of the last dread assize! No human tongue can tell, as no human heart can imagine the terrors of that tremendous day, especially the sight of the once-crucified King when He appears seated upon His Great White Throne, and when the summons shall ring out

*Come to judgment!*

*Come to judgment, come away!*   
when the grave shall not conceal the unnumbered dead, nor even the depths of the ocean suffice for a hiding place from Him that sits upon the Throne, for all shall be gathered before Him! Every eye shall see Him and they, also, that pierced Him. You will be there, my Friend! You will be there as certainly as you are here!

O you who are without Christ, all the fear and dread you have ever had in this life will be as nothing compared with the alarm and terror of that day! Your fears, when you have been laid low with fever, and have been near to deaths door, will be but as childs play compared with what you will feel at that tremendous day which is soon to come! Yet Christ says to His people, concerning even that time of terror, Look up, and lift up your heads. There is nothing for you who have put your trust in Him, to ever fear! It is your Judge who is coming, but He comes to acquit you and to exhibit you to the assembled universe clad in His own righteousness which you already wear. He who is coming is your Lord, your Friend, your Bridegroom! He who has sworn to deliver you is coming to call your body from the grave and to raise you up to dwell together with Him forever. That day of Christs appearing shall be to you a morning of the ringing out of harps and a time of joyous shouts and blissful songs

*There shall be weeping, there shall be weeping, At the Judgment Seat of Christ,*

but not for you who are in Him! It shall be your joy day, your wedding day, the brightest day in all your history!  
*When these things begin to come to pass,   
Then look up, and lift up your heads.*   
I must leave this first point concerning the terrible time when this precept is to be carried out by reminding you that when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come, the heavens shall tell usThere shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. The earth shall tell us, for upon the earth there shall be distress of nations, with perplexity. The sea shall tell us, for the sea and the waves thereof shall roar. Men shall tell us, for mens hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. And then, as all these voices shall proclaim His coming, our own eyes shall tell us, for they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great Glory. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. And in anticipation of that glorious day, each Believer can say with the Patriarch Job, 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.   
II. Now I come to THE REMARKABLE PRECEPT itselfThen look up, and lift up your heads.   
My dear Brothers and Sisters, there are some Christian people who seem to think that it is almost wicked to look up, and lift up their heads. When they come before God, their cry is, Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners. Well, but surely a true child of God gets above that condition! He is a sinner, it is true and, as far as he is a sinner, he is unhappy, but still, he has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit! He has been washed in the blood of the Lamb! He has been adopted into the family of Godsurely there is some nobler note for him to reach than that doleful dirge! If, amid plague and pestilence, or amid earthquakes and storms and wars, we are to look up, and lift up our heads, that ought to be our

daily attitude *Why does your face, you humble souls,   
Those mournful colors wear?   
What doubts are these that waste your faith, And nourish your despair?*

Listen to your Lords gracious commandLook up, and lift up your heads. What does this precept mean? First, it implies an absence of fear. Perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. What cause has a Christian for fear? What is there that can harm the man whom God loves? Will He trample on His child, or allow anyone else to hurt him? No, for all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. The sun and moon and stars. The earth and the seas. Wars and pestilences all work together for good to Gods dear children. Let us therefore cast out all fear!

This precept, surely, also means the removal of all grief. While the Christian is here, there will always be more than enough to make him grieve as a man, but there will also always be Grace in Christ to wipe every tear away. We are born to grief, but then, we are also born again, so we must not give way to weeping more than is right. We must not be overburdened with sorrow, lest we become like a drunk man. It is as evil to be drunk out of the bitter cup of affliction as out of the sweet cup of sinful pleasure. Let us put away our sorrow, grief and misery, and say with the Prophet 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.

Look up, and lift up your heads. This precept of our Lord seems to me to be very wonderful because it does not merely mean that there is to be in Believers no fear and no grief, but that even in the worst times we are to show the signs of joy. This expression implies to me signs and tokens of an outward kindLook up, and lift up your heads. Our Lord seems to say to us, Now fly your flags and ring your bells! Let your hearts be exceedingly gladso joyous that those who look at you cannot help seeing your happiness. Look up, and lift up your heads. Let there be no looking down because the earth is quaking and shaking, but let there be a looking up because you are going to rise from it! No looking down because the graves are openingwhy should you look down? You will quit the grave, never more to die. Lift up your heads. The time for you to hang your heads, like bulrushes, is already over and will certainly be over when the Lord is coming and your redemption draws near! Therefore, look up, and lift up your heads.

It will be an amazing sight when Jesus comes again! It must have been an amazing sight when Jerusalem was destroyed, but the true Christian knew all that was going to happen. And all that did happen, terrible as it was, was only a confirmation of his faith and a fulfillment of his Lords prophecies. So shall it be when, at the Last Great Day, we walk among the sons of men calmly and serenely! They will marvel at us. They will say to us, How is it that you are so joyous? We are all alarmed, our hearts are failing us for fear. And we shall take up our wedding hymn, our marriage song, The Lord is come! The Lord is come! Hallelujah! The burning earth shall be the flaming torch to light up the wedding procession! The quivering of the heavens shall be, as it were, but as the dancing of the feet of angels in those glorious festivities! And the booming and crashing of the elements shall, somehow, only help to swell the outburst of praise to God, the Just and Terrible, who is to us our exceeding joy!

I cannot speak as I would upon this glorious theme, but I think I catch some of our Masters meaning when He said, Then look up, and lift up your heads. Did He not mean that then, and always, Christians are to be filled with an inward peace and with a holy expectancy mixed with it? Whatever happens, all is well with the righteous! I know not what is to be, nor do I wish to know, but I do know that all is well and that all shall be well forever and ever. Look up, and lift up your heads, Beloved, for it is better than before. There is something brighter and more joyful coming than we have ever yet known! All our earthly bliss is but as the vestibule of our eternal delights. The Lords Kingdom is yet small and feeble, apparently, but it is to be world-wide and He, Himself, is to be manifested in His Glory! Therefore, let us look up, and lift up our heads. Look up for Him who is coming! Look up for Him who has already come! Lift up your eyes to the hills, from where your help comes Look up, and lift up your heads. It seems to me as if the text, itself, is quite enough to make you march to the strains of martial music straight away to victory! Come, let us be a band of men and women who fully trust our Lord and, who henceforth say farewell to doubt and trembling! Look up, and lift up your heads.

III. Our text finishes with A PARABLE TO ENCOURAGE US TO OBEY THE PRECEPTBehold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they are budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is near.

First, notice the signs mentioned in this parable. Summer is the time of the bursting of buds, the unfolding of flowers, the forming and ripening of the fruit. There may come many a shower in the spring, but that will not hinder the arrival of summerit will rather help summer to come! It may be cold and chill beneath the black cloud that hovers over us for a while, but that will not hinder summer. April showers bring forth May flowers. All these things are the tokens of the summers coming. So, Brothers and Sisters, when you are in trouble, expect that you are going to have a blessing! When you are passing through a great trial, look out, for there is another sign that summer is coming! Do not fear to look up, and lift up your heads, for

*The clouds you so much dread   
Are big with mercy, and shall break   
In blessings on your head.*

Look up, and lift up your heads. I wish we could get into the habit of believing that every time of need, every time of pain, every time of depression is but the commencement of a season of blessing! Though now, for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations, remember that the Lords objective in this experience is that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as you look at the black buds on the tree of your life, say to yourself, I wonder what bright flower is coming out there! Look at the dark bulbs, without any beauty at all in them, which we put into the ground, yet the flowers which come out of them are charming and fragrant. So, when God plants some black bulbs in the garden of your soul, do not cry out because of their ugliness, but look for the flowers that shall, in due time, appearand expect something beautiful from Gods sowing!

Yes, and if again the heavens should be darkened, the earth should shake, the sea should roar, kingdoms should be dissolved and pestilence should slay its myriads, yet still look up, and lift up your heads. Your Master bids you do so! He, the Crucified, who made a coronet of beauty out of the crown of thorns. He who is bedecked today with jewels which are the scars of His own suffering. He whose very Glory it is that He once diedHe it is who would have you see, in all the trials of the present hour, tokens of the benediction that is yet to come! Therefore, look up, and lift up your heads.

Further, the signs mentioned in this parable tell of certainty. When the trees are in bloom, hastening to display their leaves, there may come a frost, there may come many cold daysthere will certainly come rough winds and cloudsbut the summer will come along in due time. Every day will bring it nearer. All the devils in Hell cannot keep the spring from going on to summer, it is not possible! The forces of nature are so ordained by God that the trees must come to their perfection at the crowning of the year and, in like manner, the signs that God gives to His people, though they may not always seem promising, are very sure.

Have you trusted in Christ? Then, to you He has given peace and joy! Are you still trusting Him and will you continue to hang only upon Him and to trust wholly in Him? Then, your righteousness shall break forth as brightness and your salvation as a lamp that burns! The Lord will light your candle. The night may be very long, but the morning must come when the Sun of Righteousness shall rise upon you with healing in His wings, and you shall go out and grow up as the calves of the stall.

As for the coming of our Divine Master and the triumph of everything that is right and true. As to the fulfillment of His Covenant and the perfecting of all His everlasting purposes. As for the salvation of His elect and redeemed ones, Heaven and earth may pass away, but His Word shall not pass away till every jot and tittle of it shall be fulfilled! God is with you, God is in youwho can stand against Him? Trust in the Lord, even in the mighty God of Jacob, and you shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end! Go your way, and say, All is well, for it is in my Fathers hands; therefore will I look up, and lift up my head.

And as for you who are not His people, begin to look out for a place to hide yourselves, for Christ is coming! O you earthworms, begin to look for the holes into which you will wish to creep to hide yourselves! I wish that you would so look out for a hiding place that you would find one in that Man who presents Himself as the best hiding place for every sinner who will trust Him. God bring you all to find refuge in Christ! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**LUKE 21.**

Luke 1-6. And He looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw, also, a certain poor widow casting in her two mites. And He said, Of a truth I say to you, that this poor widow has cast in more than they all: for all these have, of their abundance, cast in to the offerings of God: but she of her penury has cast in all the living that she had. And as some spoke of the Temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said, As for these things which you behold, the days will come, in which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. This was literally true of the Temple at Jerusalem and, today, there remains nothing of it. It is also true of all earthly buildings and of all earthly things. However firm they appear to be, as though they might outlast the centuries, themselves, yet the things which are seen are temporal and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, they shall all melt into thin air and pass away. The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

7. And they asked Him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? Those questions are always being asked. They are being asked at this very day about Christs Second Coming. They shall have no answer, for Christ, Himself, assures us that as the Son of Man, He knew not the day nor the hour of His own coming. As the Son of God He knew all things, but as a Man like ourselves, He was willing to be a know-nothing upon that point.

8. And He said, Take heed that you are not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draws near: go you not therefore after them. This passage refers, in the first place, to the siege of Jerusalem and in its second and yet fuller meaning, to the coming of the Lord. It looks to me that our Lord regarded the destruction of Jerusalem as the beginning of the end, the great type and anticipation of all that will take place when He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth. And, as before the destruction of Jerusalem there were many false Christs, so will there be more of them the nearer the end of the world shall be. This shall be to us one of the tokens of our Lords speedy appearing, but we shall not be deceived thereby. Take heed that you are not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draws near: go you not therefore after them.

9. But when you shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified; for these things must first come to pass; but the end will not come immediately. Everywhere throughout the Scriptures there is this double message of our LordWatch, for I may come at any moment. Expect Me to come, and to come soon; yet never be terrified as though the time were immediately at hand, for there are certain events which must occur before My Advent. How to reconcile these two thoughts, I do not know and I do not care to know. I would like to be found in that condition which consists in part of watching and in the other part of patiently waiting and working till Christ appears.

10, 11. Then said He to them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great sights shall there be from Heaven. Someone says, perhaps, All this we have had, times without number, yet Christ has not come. Just so, for these signs are not sent to minister to our curiosity, but to keep us always on the watch. And whenever we mark these earthquakes, wars, famines and pestilences, then are we to think, Behold, He comes, and watch the more earnestly! You know how it is often with the man who is very sick. It is reported that he cannot last long. You call many times, yet he is still livingdo you, therefore, conclude that he will not die? No, but you more certainly expect that he will soon be gone. So is it with Christs Second Advent. He bids us note the signs of His coming, and yet, when some of those signs appear, He does not comeall this is to keep us still on the alert watching for Him. Even in His own day, when He so spoke that His servants expected Him to come at once, yet He also added words from which they might fairly judge that He would not come directly.

12-16. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My names sake. But it shall turn out for you an occasion for testimony. Settle it, therefore, in your hearts, not to meditate before what you shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. Nowadays, the fashion is always to meditate, and think, and excogitate a gospel for yourself. To be a thinkerthat is the very crown of perfection to some mindsbut it is not so according to our Masters mind! His servants are to speak not their own thoughts, but His thoughts! If they will keep to His Gospel, He will give them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. We are to be the repeaters of a message which is given to us, not the manufacturers of tidings! There is to be an exhibition of inventions very soon and it is quite right and proper that there should be, but I pray that none of us may ever be the inventors of a new Gospel, or of new doctrines, or of new systems of theology, but, on the contrary, let us settle it in our hearts that we will speak Christs Word all our days! And if thereby we are brought into trouble, we will depend upon Him to give us a mouth and wisdom which all our adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

16. And you shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. How true that has been many a time! For how long a period the saints were martyred! And the days of martyrdom are not yet over.

17, 18. And you shall be hated by all men for My names sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. During all the terrible siege of Jerusalem, it is believed that not one Christian perished, for God took special care of the followers of His Son. They were the most hated of all men, yet nobody could touch them! None of them took up arms, for it was contrary to their religion as, indeed, if we are Christians, it is contrary to our religion to resist evil, but we are to bear and endure. The early Christians did soand because of their very defenselessness, they were safe under the guardian care of the Lord their God!

19-24. In your patience possess you your souls. And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is near. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains and let them which are in the midst of it depart; and let not them that are in the countries enter into it. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled. And it is so even to this day. Here is another instance in which the Lord bade His people expect His coming and yet, at the same time, told them that He would not come so long as Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles. Until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled means the time when the Messiah shall gather in those Gentiles to Himself, for, when He shall appear, they shall look on Him whom they have despised, and turn to Him whom they have so long rejected.

26. And there shall be signs in the sunAs there were at the destruction of Jerusalem, and as there will be at the Second Coming of Christ. We have had a rehearsal of that coming in the destruction of the favored city, but the grand event, itself, who shall rightly speak of it?

25-27. And in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; mens heart failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see. Whether they wish to see Him or not, then shall they see

27-32. The Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near. And He spoke to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they are budding, you see and know of yourselves that summer is now near. So you, also, when you see these things happening, you know that the Kingdom of God is near. Verily I say to you, This generation shall not pass away, till all is fulfilled. As I understand it, for the first time. And afterwards it shall be fulfilled again. It is a prophecy that bears two meaningsan outer and an inner. It has been fulfilled once and it shall soon be fulfilled again.

33, 34. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life. Please notice that cares of this life are put down with over-eating and over-drinking, for men can be intoxicated and surfeited with care, either the care of getting, or the care of keeping, or the care of spending, or the care of losing. Any of these cares may cause a surfeit and a drunkenness. Therefore, take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life.

34. And so that day come upon you unawares. All that you can see in this world, you are to regard as being doomed to destruction. That destruction commenced, so to speak, when Jerusalem fell beneath the Roman sword. Everything earthly is doomed. You are living, not in your eternal mansions, but you are living a makeshift life. You are passing through a wilderness, you are pilgrims, you are sojournersthis is not your rest. Do not get to love this world, or to be taken up with it. Do not strike your roots into ityou are not to dwell here and to always live here. You are walking among shadowsregard them as such. Hug them not to your bosom. Feed not your souls upon them, lest, when that Day comes, before whose coming all of them shall melt away, you shall be filled with amazement and shame.

35-37. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch, therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man. And in the daytime He was teaching in the Temple; and at night He went out, and abode in the mountain that is called the Mount of Olives. You know what He did there, for

*Cold mountains and the midnight air,*

*Witnessed the fervor of His prayer.*   
Jesus always practiced what He preached. He said to His disciples, Watch, therefore, and pray always, so He, Himself, both watched and prayed.

38. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple, to hear Him. May we all be willing, not only to hear Him, but also to heed what He says! Amen.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK343, 347, 364.   
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Sermon #2636 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE PERPETUITY OF THE GOSPEL   
NO. 2636

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, AUGUST 20, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 28, 1882.

**Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away. Luke 21:33.**   
LAST Lords-Day morning I preached upon the perpetuity of the Law of   
God, [Sermon #1660, Volume 28The Perpetuity of the Law of Godread/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org ] basing my remarks

upon our Lords words, For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all is fulfilled. Tonight, I am not going to speak of the Law, but of the Gospel. And, by the term, the Gospel, I mean the summary of all that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke when He was here below. Of that Gospel it may be said, as He, Himself, said of the Law, that not one jot or tittle of it shall pass away till all is fulfilled. The Gospel of Christ is not merely the Gospel of yesterday, but, like Christ Himself, it is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. It is not a Gospel simply for this age, or for some other age, a Gospel which shall, by-and-by, be worn out and cast aside. But when yon blue heavens shall be folded up, like a worn-out vestment, the Gospel shall still be as powerful as ever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, says our Lord, but My Words shall not pass away.

I. Without further preface, I remark, first, that THE WORDS OF JESUS MUST STAND, COME WHAT MAY. If you accept the testimony of Christ concerning His own Wordsand you who are His followers will not question anything that He saysthen this is certain, that the Words of Jesus must stand forever, come what may.

The major change of Heaven and earth passing away includes all lesser changes, but whatever alteration may come before the last great change, Christs Words shall still stand The world gets more civilizedso I am told, though, when I read the newspapers, I am not quite sure of it. The world gets more intelligentso I am told, though, when I read the magazinesI mean, the first-class quarterliesI am not certain that it is so, for, in that direction, the ignorance appears to me to become greater every day. I mean the ignorance among the learned and scientific men, who seem to me, in their discoveries, to wander continually further and further, not only from that which is revealed and Infallible, but also from that which is rational and truthful.

But still, the world does alter and, according to its own notion, it is getting wonderfully near perfection! Was there ever such a century as the nineteenth? Was there ever such a period of time since the world began? What is there that we are not doing? Lighting ourselves by electricity, speaking by means of the lightning, traveling by steamwhat an amazing people we are! Yes, yes, and we are going to do much greater things than these, no doubt. And many matters which are now reckoned as mere dreams will probably because accomplished facts in a few generations! But after these marvels have all come and gone, the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ will still abidethey will not pass away! Fashion follows fashion, systems succeed systems, everything beneath the moon is like the moon, it waxes and wanes and is always on the change! But come whatever change there may, even if the human race should reach that wonderful development which some prophesy for it, yet still, the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ shall not pass away. And when the greatest alteration of all shall take place and this present dispensation shall come to an endand all material things shall be consumed with fire and be destroyedyet, even then, there shall remain above the ashes of the world and all that is therein, the imperishable Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, for, as Peter says, The Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

Why is it that Christs Words will last in this way? I answer, first, because they are Divine. That which is Divine will endure. All Gods works will not last forever, but His Words will. He will never retract anything that He has said. Even Baalim had Light of God enough to declare. 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? God has never had, as our common saying puts it, to eat His own words, nor will He! And Christ has never had to retract anything that He has uttered. All His life, He had not even once to make an apology and say, I spoke too fast, or too warmly, or somewhat inaccurately. Everything that He said has stood and shall stand because the Divinity that is in it makes it everlasting!

Again, the Words of Christ must stand because they are the Revelation of the innermost heart of God. This great world, and the sun, and moon, and stars, reveal Godbut not as fully and as clearly as the Son of God reveals Him. The Incarnate Word is the most grand manifestation of Deity and the Words of that Eternal Word are the Revelation of the purpose of God which He formed in His Infinite mind before He made the world. That which, in the secret counsels of eternity was plannedthat which

*Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,*   
was devised in the heart of the Most Highis revealed to us, as far as it may be revealed, in the Words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gods essential purposes cannot be alteredthey must all be fulfilled. His eternal plan was formed in the foresight of all generations that shall exist, so it must stand unchanged and, inasmuch as those purposes and that plan are closely connected with the Words of Christ and, indeed, are made known to us by His Words, therefore the Words of Christ must stand forever.

Further, the Words of Christ must live even when Heaven and earth have passed away because they are pure Truth of God. Everything that is absolutely and purely true must be abiding and enduring. See how long solid silver lasts. You may buy plated goods for use in your house, but, after a time, in the process of wearing you begin to see the baser metal underneath. But if you have real silver, hall-marked, it will last your lifetime. David truly said, The Words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Their surface does not wear off and reveal the dross beneath, for there is none! All is pure throughout. Impurity breeds decayerror is corruptionevery evil thing carries within it the seeds of its own death. But Gods Truth has no corruption in it. It is the living and incorruptible Seed which, therefore, lives and abides forever. That which is perfectly pure will not ferment because it contains within itself no germs of decay. Nor shall it pass away, but it shall live forever. Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke nothing but pure, unalloyed Truththe very Truth of God and, therefore, it shall stand fast forever.

And that Christs Words shall live eternally, we do believe, again, because no power can prevent it. What power is there that can prevent Christs Words from being triumphant? Do you hear the roar from the pit of Hell as that question is asked? The devil and his legions of fallen spirits say that they will prevent the triumph of the Words of Christ and, whereas He has declared that His Kingdom shall come, they conspire to prevent its coming. But Christ has already broken the head of the dragon, He has trampled the old serpent beneath His feet and His Omnipotence is greater than Satans potency. The devil may be mighty, but Christ is Almighty, and Hell shall suffer dire defeat at the hand of the Crucified Savior! As for the wicked men upon this earth, they often league themselves together and take counsel against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. You know how futile are all their efforts, for the Psalmist says, He that sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak to them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.

There is no power that can effectually resist the Words of Christ. Where the word of a king is, there is power, but where the Word of God is, there is Infinite power! What He says must be done. Before He said, Let there be light, there was not a spark amid all earths gloom that could help to make the day! There was nothing lying here that could have created the light and yet the darkness fled before that fiat of God! And so, today, if there is nothing on earth to help the fulfillment of Christs Word, He has said to this poor dark world, Let there be light, and that light, which He has kindled, is growing brighter and brighterand shall increase unto the perfect day. O devils in Hell, can you blot out that light? Impossible! Christs Word must stand!

And yet once more, Christs Word must stand because His honor is involved in its permanence. If He had to alter anything He said, it would be manifest that He had made mistakes which He must rectify. I often get books in which there is a slip of paper containing errata fastened at the beginning. They are said to be printers blunders, but I should not wonder if they are also the mistakes of the writer. But there they are and I have to take a pencil and make these corrections in the volume. There are no errata in the Words of Christ, nor can there be any corrections in anything that He has said. Davids declaration applies to all the Words of Jesus. The Law of the Lord is perfect. Christs Words are all they should be, no less and no more, and cursed shall that man be who shall add to or take from them! There cannot be any alteration in them, for that would be to dishonor Christs wisdom. Alteration, indeed! That would make it appear that Christ trifled while He was here, or that He said what He must necessarily unsay and that He was, after all, but an experimenter as to truth, getting as near it as He could and afterwards correcting His mistakes, like a physician who does not understand a disease and who gives a medicine which drives his patient too far one way, and then gives him another drug which brings him back again, but never completely cures him! Christ never has to act in that fashion. He knew what He meant and He said what He meantand that which He said, and that which He meant shall stand even when, like withered figs that drop from the tree the stars shall fall from their places, the sun shall be turned into blood and the moon shall become black as a sackcloth of hair! It must be so and, therefore, all you who believe in Jesus, believe firmly in this double declaration that He has made, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away.

II. Now, secondly, THIS DECLARATION APPLIES TO ALL CHRISTS WORDSnot merely to some of them, but to all, for it is left with an intentional indefiniteness which makes it refer to all that He saidMy Words shall not pass away.

This declaration applies, then, to the Doctrinal teaching of Christ. Whatever Doctrine Christ taught, either Himself, personally, or by His Apostles guided by the Spirit of God, is definite, distinct, immovable Truth of God. There are many ministers, nowadays, who think that they must shift their doctrinal landmarks and there are others who have no landmarks at all. They believe something, or everything, or nothingit is difficult to tell whichand their common cry is, We must be charitable! I have known many people who were willing to be charitable with other peoples money, and I have known others who are charitable with Doctrines that are not theirs to give away, for they are Christs Doctrines but these supposed custodians of them care so little for them that they offer to give them away in any quantity! But a faithful steward of Christs Gospel will not do so. He who loves Christ and wishes to honor Him, keeps Christs Words, and treasures them up!

I have heard of this body of divinity and that, but the body of divinity that I believe in is the body of Jesus Christ! And the true divinity, the real theology, is that wondrous Logos, the Incarnate Word of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! If we will take Jesus, and Him, only, to be our Leader, there are a great many ways that we shall never goand there are a great many things which are done by different sects of professing Christians which we shall not do, as we cannot see that Christ ever did anything of the sort! And if He did not, neither will we. That is a good rule for all Christians which I saw in one of our Orphanage schoolroomsWhat would Jesus do? There cannot be a better guide than that for Believers, for our text is true with regard to Doctrine, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away. I am often said to be a very old-fashioned, narrow-minded sort of person and I have not the slightest objection to the accusation. I certainly am not newfashioned and do not intend to be, for the old is better and, in theology, there is nothing new that is true, and nothing true that is new! The Truth of God is as old as the everlasting hills and to that I desire to keep even to the end, and I trust that you, also, will be of the same mind.

Next, we have the Words of Jesus, not only about Doctrine, but He has given us plain practical commands. The Master taught a wonderful system of ethics and to that system we are to cling with the same tenacity that should characterize our hold on the Doctrines that Christ taught. Brothers and Sisters, let us never get away from such a Divine teaching as thisI 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. Let us not only love one another, but let us seek to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to such as are of the household of faith. Be it our daily delight to cast out all malice and unkindness from our hearts, that the Law of Love may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. You may depend upon it that there will never be any improvement upon the teaching of Christ! There have been some persons who have tried to improve upon it, but they have made a signal failure of all their attempts. His ethical teachingHis teaching of moralshas impressed even some of those who have not accepted His Doctrines, or even believed in His Divinity! They have been astonished at the purity, the holiness, the love which Jesus Christ inculcated in the Laws which He laid down for the guidance of His disciples.

But I must press on and remind you that the promises of Christ shall stand forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His promises shall not pass away. Is not that a blessed Truth of God? He said, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come along with you, then, poor laboring and heavy laden Souls, for He will give you rest! Heaven and earth shall pass away, but He will give you rest if you come to Him. And He has said, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Come along with you, then! Obey both His commandsfirst, believe, and then be baptized, for, though Heaven and earth shall pass awayyou shall be saved! There are many things which may be but actions. Like the phantom visions of a night, they may dissolve, but you shall be saved, that is a sure thing, that is certain beyond all question! The Lord Jesus has promised such great things to His people that I could keep you here all night if I were to try to repeat those gracious Words of promise which streamed out of His lips! Here is one of the sweetest of themAll that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and he that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. If you come to Him, He will not in any wise cast you out! He must, He will receive you! Heaven and earth may pass away, and they shall pass away in due time, but never shall a soul that comes to Jesus be rejected by Him! Oh, that many of you would avail yourselves of that promise this very hour!

Dear aged Friend, you are getting very feeble and you have passed through a great many changes, but that promise has not been altered all the while! Do you recollect when your mother told you about Christ when you were a curly-headed boy? Ah, you say, it is too late, now! No, my dear Friend, no! Heaven and earth have not passed away yet, and that promise has not passed awayyou may still come to Christ, so come and welcome, for it is still written, He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. He is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. Trust His promise even now! Bow your head in the pew and silently seek the EverBlessed One and He will be found of you, for His Word is as sure to you as it was to meas sure to you as it has been to tens of thousands who, in different times, have tried it and found that promise true!

But remember, also, that as every Word of promise from Christ shall stand, so shall every Word of prophecy. There is a whole Book of Revelation which I do not understand, but which I fully believe. I am very glad to find something in the Bible which I cannot comprehend, but which I may believe, for I do not call that faith which limits its belief to what it can understand. If you have any little children, you delight to see the way in which they trust you when they cannot make out what you are doing, though they are sure that you are doing right. I want you, dear Friends, to have just that kind of faith in the Book of Revelationit is all true, although you cannot interpret all its mysteries. And it will all come true every word of itin Gods good time! The Lord shall come, the Lord shall reign, the Lord shall judge, the Lord shall justify and glorify His people and the Lord shall bid the ungodly depart from Him under the curse. I pray that we may all be helped to believe every Word of it.

When I read the Bible, I like to read it in the spirit of the little boy whose mother told him something, but his schoolmates laughed at him for believing it. They asked him how he knew that it was true and he said that his mother told him so, and his mother never told a lie. They tried to prove that it could not be so, but he said, Look here, my mother said so, and it is so if it isnt so. And if I find anything in the Word of Godand somebody with wonderful wisdom tells me that it cannot be so, he is quite sure of itI laugh his cannots into oblivion and replyIt is so if it isnt so! Your supposed proof is nothing to me! If God has said it, and all the tongues that ever wagged should deny it, I would still say, Let God be true and every man a liar. Hold then, dear Friends, to the Words of Christ even though you do not always understand them.

I must also remind you that every Word of threats that Jesus Christ has spoken is true. Oh, that we could have seen His face and heard the very tones of His voice! There must have been an inexpressible sweetness and an ineffable tenderness about the speech of Jesus Christ. All those who heard Him speak knew that He loved them. And the publicans and sinners, the poor pariahs, the off-casts, those who were scorned by everybody else, drew near to hear Him because they felt that there was sympathy towards them in that great heart of His. Yet, did you ever notice you must have noticed it, that never man spoke such terrible words of threatening to the ungodly as this Man spoke? It was Jesus who spoke of the worm that never dies and of the fire that never shall be quenched! It was Jesus who spoke of destroying both body and soul in Hell! It was He who said many of the most terrible things about future punishment that were ever uttered, such as that parable of the rich man who died and was buried; and in Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.

When you hear men trying to soften down the threats of the Scriptures, do not believe that love to souls suggests such a course of action it often is the proof of true love that it can speak harsh things! If a man comes and tells you very pleasant things about yourself, beware of him he is not your friend! But the man who can warn you, who can point out your fault and your follywho can run the risk of losing your esteem by indicating your dangerthat is the one who has a sincere affection for you! And a wise man will choose such a friend as that. Whatever anyone may think or say, there is not a terrible Word that ever fell from the Saviors lips which will not stand! Though you do not like it, you cannot alter itit will not be selected by your likes or dislikes. He that believes not shall be damned. You call that a hard saying? Regardless, it is true, or Christ would not have said it. It must have cost Him much inward anguish to utter such a sentence as that! It must have been a sort of mental crucifixion to Him to speak as He did about the terrors of the world to come. And you can be you sure that they are not less awful than He described, not less horrible than He depicted them! So, whatever any may say by way of toning down His threats, reject their lies, for Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Words of Christ shall not pass away.

III. Thirdly, and lastly, I want to show you that THIS TRUTH HAS A BEARING UPON US ALL.   
First, I am sure that it has a relation to the preacher. My text innately concerns me and all who are called to be ministers of the Gospel. Dear Brothers, we have to preach the same Gospel that our Lord Jesus Christ preached, and no other. I am thankful that I do not know any other Gospel. Long ago I came to Pauls resolve and, I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I stick to that, and that is what all of us must do if we would please our Master! There is no progression in the Truth of God, itself. We progress in our knowledge of what Christ said, and in our understanding of it, but the Truths that He uttered remain just the same as they were in His days. You know that when your little children go down to the seaside, they build tiny castles and houses, and make gardens in the sandbut they are all washed away when the tide rolls over them. I should not like to preach a theology of the kind that is being constantly washed away, leaving me to start afresh with some more sand.

The Eddystone Lighthouse has stood gloriously, and the reason why another has to be built is because the rock has given way under itthe lighthouse, itself, is all right. We thank God that when we build upon what Christ says, we build on a Rock that will not give way under us! And if we are as steadfast as the old lighthouse, and not a stone of us will stir, we shall be perfectly justified by the equal steadfastness of that Truth of God upon which we build! There is no stirring that rock which is formed of what Christ said. The earth may not only quake, but melt. And the unpillared vault of Heaven that has stood so firm these many ages even it shall come down with a crash! But no Word of Jesus Christ shall ever be dissolved or pass away! We must stick to the old Gospel, then. It sufficed for our fathers and our grandfathers, and it will suffice for our grandchildren if the world stands so long as to see them also grow up to preach it!   
This text also has a bearing upon Church members, especially upon you very timid souls who, now and then, get afraid that everything good is coming to an end. I meet with some dear old souls, of both sexes, who are very nervous about what is coming to pass. They are afraid that dreadful times are coming. Yes, no doubt they are, but there is a sinful timidity which does dishonor to the power and Truth of God. There have always been, in all ages, some Latimers and Luthers who had no fear for Gods Truth. People complained that they were very dogmatic but they did not care what was said about themthey were probably just as happy whatever the world said!   
Luther had one very special friend among the German princes and someone asked the Reformer, Suppose that he should withdraw his protection from you, where would you hide? Beneath the broad shield of Heaven, he answered. And Luther spoke wisely. He would not feel that he was dependent upon any man, but upon God alone. I wish, my poor trembling Friend, that you had something of his holy courage. Do not get into that doubting state of mind again! Heaven and earth shall pass away, so wait till you see them all going! And when they do go, just sit still and sing   
*Then should the earths old pillars shake, And all the wheels of nature break,   
Our steady souls should fear no more,   
Than solid rocks when billows roar.*   
But, next, our text has a bearing on all Believers. Dear Friends, if Christs Words shall never pass away, let us believe them to be true to ourselves. Are any of you persecuted? Do not give way for a single moment! Stand to your colors! Never be ashamed to acknowledge your Lord. Remember how He said, Who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forget the Lord your Maker, who has stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and has feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? Hold you to Christ, whose Words shall never pass away.   
Are you very sick and weak, or are you getting very poor? Well, your health and your property, too, will pass away, but Christs Words will never pass away. Are you dying? Christs Words will never die or pass awaydie with them in your heart! When I went, last week, to see one of the members of this Church who is very ill, I had a little of my own teaching given back to me. This dear Brother said to me, Do you remember saying to us, years ago, What time I am afraid, I will trust in You, is a third-class carriage, but it is in the Gospel train, and it will take you to Heaven? And you added, Why do you not go in the firstclass carriageI will trust, and not be afraid? I commend that firstclass carriage to all of you! I will trust, and not be afraid. Let faith expel fear and so travel to Heaven first-class! You well may do so, for there is no cause to be afraid.   
If any of the Words of Christ could pass away with this wind, and that wind, and the other wind, oh, dear, what a card-house we would live in! But if they all stand firmly foreveras they dothen why and, therefore, should we indulge the slightest fear? One reason why some of you do not rest in Christ as you should is because you do not get right down flat on to His Words and trust wholly to them. You know what the slave said when his master asked him why he was so confident about salvation. He answered, Massa, you try to stand, but Sam fall flat down on de promise, and when he is flat down on de promise, he cant fall any lower. Just so! Then fall flat on the promise and if you lie there, clinging and resting there, alone, then Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not the Words on which you are trusting!   
Now, last of all, this is a word to sinners. What a message my text has for those of you who do not love Christ, those of you who are undecided! Christs Words shall not pass awaywhat then? This is the only Gospel that you will ever hearthe last train is about to start. If you do not go by that, there is no other that will carry you to Heaven, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. The Gospel will never change its character. Are any of you waiting till it does, like the countryman who said he would cross the river when all the water had run by? There will never be any easier way to Heaven than there is at this moment! I verily believe that some people, by delay, make the road to Heaven harder for themselves than it would otherwise be. If they are ultimately saved, it is more difficult for them to trust to Christ when they have been long delaying. Even mercy seems, sometimes, to act like Benjamin Franklin did when a man came into his shop to buy a book, but wasted the booksellers time by his foolish delay. The man asked, What is the price of this book, Sir? Four shillings, said Franklin. It is rather high, said the man, I will not take it. He waited about ten minutes and then he asked, What now, really, will you take for that book? Five shillings, said Franklin. No, said the customer, you asked only four shillings just now. Franklin replied, Sir, you have taken up ten minutes of my time attending to you, so that makes the price of the book one shilling more. It is five shillings, now, but if you do not buy it quickly, it will be more. There was some common sense in that mode of dealing! And you will truly find, in spiritual matters, that there is nothing gained by delay. But there is increased sin, increased hardness of heart and even an increased difficulty in yielding the soul to Christ!   
The best time for any of you to come to Jesus is just now! You can never have a fairer opportunity than that which lies before you at the present moment. I am sure of it, because Gods wisdom always picks the best opportunityand what does Gods wisdom say? Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. And yet again, Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. If Christs Words are to stand, there will be no other Gospel ever presented to you. If Christs Words are to stand, why should you delay? Sometimes, when I have been returning from preaching away from here, I have seen people outside the theater as I have gone by, quite a crowd of them, and I have asked a friend why they were waiting. Oh, he has answered, they are expecting to get in at half price. Well, now, you cannot expect anything of that kind in the matter of salvation, for the original charge is without money and without price, and it never can be any lower than it is now! Then why not come at once?   
I came to Jesus Christ when I was 15 years of age and I wish I had come to Him 15 years before if it had been possible. Oh, that I should ever have lived a single minute without the sweet knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ! It is not a thing to be put off! God grant that you may no longer put it off! You have done too much of that already, so make haste and come to Christ this very moment!   
Let me earnestly entreat you not to be looking out for some larger possible hope that may reach you after death. That is a terrible delusion! I pray you, risk not your soul upon it! Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christs Words shall not pass away and, as I have already reminded you, He has said, He that believes not shall be damned. And so he will be and there is nothing but that awful doom for him. You have your choice. If you trust in Christ, you shall have eternal glory. If you will not have Christ as your Savior, you shall have everlasting punishment. There is no other hope for you. I pray God to lead you to come to Christ at once. Oh, that you would not hesitate, since He invites you! Oh, that you would not tarry, since that were to insult Him! May His blessed Spirit now compel you to come in, that the house of His mercy may be filled! All you have to do is to trust Him! You have not to be doers until first you have trusted to what He has done. Then He will make you doers! Come empty! Come sinful! Come hard-hearted! Come just as you are! Tarry not to cleanse or mend, but, just as you find yourself, rest on Jesus! Fall flat on His promise! Depend upon the merit of His blood and the power of His ever-living plea! God help you, now, to do this, for His dear names sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALMS 20, 21.**

The 20th Psalm is a prayer for the Kingnot only for David or Solomon, but for great Davids greater Sonthe true King of the Church. As if the Church saw Jesus going forth to His work, she offers up a prayer for Him.

Psalm 20:1. The LORD hear you in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend you. And so it came to pass, in that dread night in Gethsemane, Jesus was heard in that He feared. The God of wrestling Jacob heard the cries of His dear Son and defended Him, or supported Him, as it is in the marginal reading.

2. Send you help from the sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion. And you know how there came, from yonder heavenly Jerusalem, an angel strengthening Him. The celestial messenger stood at His side amid the gloom of the olive garden and brought Him comfort and succor from Gods right hand

*His earnest prayers, His deepening groans Were heard before angelic thrones.   
Amazement wrapped the sky!   
Go, strengthen Christ! the Father said!   
The astonished seraph bowed his head   
And left the realms on high.*

3. Remember all your offerings, and accept your burnt sacrifice. Selah. And so He did. There was never such acceptance given to any burnt sacrifice as was given to our Divine Lord when He offered up Himself!

4. Grant you according to your own heart, and fulfill all your counsel. Is it not written, Prayer also shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised? Here, then, is a suitable prayer for you to present on behalf of the Lord Jesusthat God would grant Him according to His own heart and fulfill all His counsel!

5. We will rejoice in your salvation. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us make this verse true! And even if we have anything to sigh over, let us lay it aside while we now devote ourselves to the happy work of rejoicing in the glorious salvation of our Lord and King!

5-9. And in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfill all your petitions. Now know I that the LORD saves His anointed; He will hear him from His holy Heaven, with the saving strength of His right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen and stand upright. Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call. What a blessing it is that our King hears us when we call upon Him! He is full of sympathy with all His people, for, in the time of His sojourn on earth, He often knew what it was to plead with His Father. And as God heard Him, then, so does He, Himself, hear us. All glory be to His blessed name! The 21st Psalm views the King as having ended his battle and achieved his victory.

Psalm 21:1, 2. The king shall joy in Your strength, O LORD; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! You have given him his hearts desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah. God gave to Jesus the strength needed to accomplish the work which He came to do and He is daily giving Him to see of the travail of His soul that He may be satisfied.

3. For you meet him with the blessings of goodness. They go before Him like scouts or forerunners! Wherever Jesus comes, the blessings of goodness fly before Him to the sons of men.

3. You set a crown of pure gold on his head. Let us crown Him afresh, tonight, with our poor garlands of praise, while God sets a crown of pure gold upon His head!

4. He asked life of You, and You gave it to him, even length of days forever and ever. And because He lives, we shall also live! The Father has given Him to have life in Himself and hence He communicates that life to us who believe in Him.

5. His glory is great in Your salvation: honor and majesty have You laid upon him. Heaped it on Him. There is no one so worthy of honor as our Lord Jesus is! None are so majestic as the Man of Sorrows who once bowed His head to death on His peoples behalf.

6. For You have made him most blessed forever: You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your Countenance. The Father rewards Him for all His serviceYou have made Him most blessed forever. We cannot imagine how great is the joy of Christ as His Father smiles upon Him You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your Countenance.

7, 8. For the king trusts in the LORD, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved. Your hand shall find out all Your enemies. Oh, what a wonderful prophecy that is! Christs hand shall find out all His enemies. If they hide themselves, He shall discover them. If they cover themselves with chain armor, yet still His hand will find out their vulnerable parts and touch their very souls until they melt with fear! Your hand shall find out all Your enemies. Are there any of these enemies of Christ here, tonight? If so, not only will His eyes find them out, but His hands will find them out, too.

8-13. Your right hand shall find out those that hate You. You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shall You destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. For they intended evil against You: they imagined a mischievous device which they are not able to perform. Therefore shall You make them turn their back, when You shall make ready Your arrows upon Your strings against the face of them. Be you exalted, LORD, in Your own strength: so will we sing and praise Your power.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK166, 346, 527.   
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CHRIST AND HIS TABLE COMPANIONS   
NO. 3107

**A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 1908. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And when the hour was come, He sat down,   
and the twelve Apostles with Him.   
Luke 22:14.**

THE outward ordinances of the Christian religion are but twoand those two are exceedingly simpleyet neither of them has escaped human alteration. And, alas, much mischief has been worked and much of precious teaching has been sacrificed by these miserable perversions! For instance, the ordinance of Baptism, as it was administered by the Apostles, represented the burial of the Believer with Christ and his rising with his Lord into newness of life. Men had to exchange immersion for sprinkling and the intelligent Believer for an unconscious childand so the ordinance is slain! The other sacred institution, the Lords Supper, like Believers Baptism, is simplicity itself. It consists of broken bread and wine poured outthese items being eaten and drunk at a festivala delightful picture of the sufferings of Christ for us and of the fellowship which the saints have with one another and with Him. But this ordinance, also, has been tampered with by men. By some, the wine has been taken away altogether, or reserved only for a priestly caste. And the simple bread has been changed into a consecrated host. As for the table, the very emblem of fellowship in all nationsfor what expresses fellowship better than surrounding a table and eating and drinking together? This, indeed, must be put away and an altar must be erected! And the bread and wine which were to help us to remember the Lord Jesus are changed into an unbloody sacrifice, and so the whole thing becomes an unscriptural celebration instead of a holy institution for fellowship!

Let us be warned by these mistakes of others never either to add to or take from the Word of God so much as a single jot or tittle! Keep upon the foundation of the Scriptures and you stand safely, and have an answer for those who question you. Yes, and an answer which you may render at the bar of God! But once allow your own whim, or fancy, or taste, or your notion of what is proper and right to rule you, instead of the Word of God, and you have entered upon a dangerous course! And unless the Grace of God prevents, boundless mischief may ensue. The Bible is our standard authoritynone may turn from it. The wise man says in Ecclesiastes, I counsel you to keep the Kings commandment. We would repeat his advice and add to it the sage precept of the mother of our Lord, at Cana, when she said, Whatever He says unto you, do it.

We shall now ask you in contemplation to gaze upon the first celebration of the Lords Supper. You perceive at once that there was no altar in that large upper room. There was a table. A table with bread and wine upon it, but no altar! And Jesus did not kneelthere is no sign of thatHe sat down. I doubt not, after the Oriental mode of sitting, that is to say, by a partial reclining, He sat down with His Apostles. Now, He who ordained this Supper knew how it ought to be observed. And as the first celebration of it was the model for all others, we may be assured that the right way of coming to this Communion is to assemble around a tableand to sit or recline while we eat and drink together of bread and wine in remembrance of our Lord!

While we see the Savior sitting down with His 12 Apostles, let us enquire, first, what did this make them? Then, secondly, what did this imply? And, thirdly, what further may we legitimately infer from this?

I. First, then, we see the Great Master, the Lord, the King in Zion, sitting down at the table to eat and drink with His 12 ApostlesWHAT DID THIS MAKE THEM?

Note what they were at first. By His first calling of them they became His followers, for He said unto them, Follow Me. That is to say, they were convinced by sundry marks and signs, that He was the Messiah and they, therefore, became His followers. Followers may be at a great distance from their leader and enjoy little or no communion with him, for the leader may be too great to be approached by the common members of his band. In the case of these disciples, their following was unusually close, for their Master was very condescending. But still, their communion was not always of the most intimate kind at first and, therefore, it was not at the first that He called them to such a festival as this Supper. They began with following and this is where we must begin. If we cannot enter as yet into closer association with our Lord, we may at least know His voice by His Spirit and follow Him as the sheep follow the shepherd. The most important way of following Him is to trust Him and then diligently to imitate His example. This is a good beginning and it will end wellfor those who walk with Him today shall rest with Him hereafterthose who tread in His footsteps shall sit with Him on His Throne!

Being His followers, they came next to be His disciples. A man may have been a follower for a while and yet may not have reached discipleship. A follower may follow blindly and hear a great deal which he does not understand, but when he becomes a disciple, his master instructs him and leads him into truth. To explain, to expound, to solve difficulties, to clear away doubts and to make truth intelligible is the office of a teacher among his disciples. Now, it was a very blessed thing for the followers to become disciples, but still, disciples are not necessarily so intimate with their Master as to sit and eat with Him. Socrates and Plato knew many in the Academy whom they did not invite to their homes. My Brothers and Sisters, if Jesus had but called us to be His disciples and no more, we would have had cause for great thankfulness. If we had been allowed to sit at His feet and had never shared in such an entertainment as that before us, we ought to have been profoundly grateful. But now that He has favored us with a yet higher place, let us never be unfaithful to our discipleship! Let us daily learn of Jesus! Let us search the Bible to see what it was that He taught us and then, by the aid of His Holy Spirit, let us scrupulously obey! Yet there is a something beyond.

Being the Lords disciples, the chosen ones next rose to become His servants which is a step in advance, since the disciple may be but a child, but the servant has some strength, has received some measure of training and renders somewhat in return. Their Master gave them power to preach the Gospel and to execute commissions of Graceand happy were they to be called to wait upon such a Master and aid in setting up His Kingdom! My dear Brothers and Sisters, are you all consciously Christs servants? If so, though the service may at times seem heavy because your faith is weak, yet be very thankful that you are servants at all, for it is better to serve God than to reign over all the kingdoms of this world! It is better to be the lowest servant of Christ than to be the greatest of men and remain slaves to your own lusts, or be mere menpleasers. His yoke is easy and His burden is light! The servant of such a Master should rejoice in his callingyet there is something beyond even this.

Towards the close of His life, our Master revealed the yet nearer relation of His disciples and uttered words like theseHenceforth 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. This is a great step in advance. The friend, however humble, enjoys much familiarity with his friend. The friend is told what the servant need not know. The friend enjoys a communion to which the mere servant, disciple, or follower has not attained. May we know this higher association, this dearer bond of relationship! May we not be content without the enjoyment of our Masters friendship! He that has friends must show himself friendly, and if we would have Christs friendship, we must befriend His cause, His Truth and His people! He is a Friend that loves at all timesif you would enjoy His friendship, take care to abide in Him!

Now note that on the night before His Passion, our Lord led His friends a step beyond ordinary friendship. The mere follower does not sit at table with his leader. The disciple does not claim to be a fellow commoner with his master. The servant is seldom entertained at the same table with his lord. The befriended one is not always invited to be a guest. But here the Lord Jesus made His chosen ones to be His table companions. He lifted them up to sit with Him at the same table, to eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup with Himself. From that position He has never degraded themthey were representative men and where the Lord placed them, He has permanently placed all His saints! All the Lords believing people are sitting, by sacred privilege and calling, at the same table with Jesus, for truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. He has come into our hearts and He sups with us and we with Him! We are His table companions and shall eat bread with Him in the Kingdom of God!

II. So now we shall pass on, in the second place, to ask, WHAT DID THIS TABLE COMPANIONSHIP IMPLY?   
It implied, first of all, mutual fidelity. This solemn eating and drinking together was a pledge of faithfulness to one another. It must have been so understood, or otherwise there would have been no force in the complaint, He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me. Did not this mean that because Judas had eaten bread with his Lord, he was bound not to betray Him, and so to lift up his heel against Him? This was the seal of an implied covenanthaving eaten together, they were under bond to be faithful to one another! Now, as many of you as are really the servants and friends of Christ may know that the Lord Jesus, in eating with you at His table, pledges Himself to be faithful to you. The Master never plays the Judasthe Judas is among the disciples. There is nothing traitorous in the LordHe is not only able to keep that which we have committed to Him, but He is faithful and will do it. He will be faithful, not only as to the great and main matter, but also to every promise He has made! Know then, assuredly, that your Master would not have asked you to His table to eat bread with Him if He intended to desert you! He has received you as His honored guests and fed you upon His choicest food and thereby He does as good as say to you, I will never leave you, come what may. And in all times of trial, depression and temptation, I will be at your right hand and you shall not be movedand to the very last you shall prove My faithfulness and truth.   
But, Beloved, you do not understand this Supper unless you are also reminded of the faithfulness that is due from you to your Lord, for the feast is common and the pledge mutual. In eating with Him, you pledge your faithfulness to the Crucified. Beloved, how have you kept your pledge during the past? You have eaten bread with Him and I trust that in your hearts you have never gone so far aside as to lift up your heel against Himbut have you always honored Him as you should? Have you acted as guests should have done? Can you remember His love to you and put your love to Him side by side with itwithout being ashamed? From this time forth may the Holy Spirit work in our souls a jealous fidelity to the Well-Beloved which shall not permit our hearts to wander from Him, or suffer our zeal for His Glory to decline!   
Again, remember that there is in this solemn eating and drinking together, a pledge of fidelity between the disciples, themselves, as well as between the disciples and their Lord. Judas would have been a traitor if he had betrayed Peter, or John, or James. So, when you come to the one table, my Brothers and Sisters, you must henceforth be true to one another. All bickering and jealousies must cease and a generous and affectionate spirit must rule in every bosom! If you hear any speak against those with whom you have communed, reckon that as you have eaten bread with them, you are bound to defend their reputations. If any railing accusation is raised against any Brother in Christ, reckon that his character is as dear to you as your own! Let a sacred Freemasonry be maintained among us, if I may liken a far higher and more spiritual union to anything which belongs to common life. You are members, one of anothersee that you fervently love each other with a pure heart. Drinking of the same cup, eating of the same bread, you set forth before the world a token which I trust is not meant to be a lie. As it truly shows Christs faithfulness to you, so let it as really typify your faithfulness to Christ and to one another!   
In the next place, eating and drinking together was a token of mutual confidence. They, in sitting there together, voluntarily avowed their confidence in each other. Those disciples trusted their Master. They knew He would not mislead or deceive them. They also trusted each other, for when they were told that one of them would betray their Lord, they did not suspect each other, but each one asked, Lord, is it I? They had much confidence in one another and the Lord Jesus, as we have seen, had placed great confidence in them by treating them as His friends. He had even trusted them with the great secret of His coming sufferings and death! They were a trustful company who sat at that Supper table. Now, Beloved, when you gather around this table, come in the spirit of implicit trustfulness in the Lord Jesus. If you are suffering, do not doubt His love, but believe that He works all things for your good. If you are vexed with cares, prove your confidence by leaving them entirely in your Redeemers hands. It will not be a festival of fellowship to you if you come here with suspicions about your Master. No, show your confidence as you eat of the bread with Him. Let there also be a brotherly confidence in each other. Grievous would it be to see a spirit of suspicion and distrust among you. Suspicion is the death of fellowship! The moment one Christian imagines that another thinks badly of him, though there may not be the slightest truth in that thought, yet straightway the root of bitterness is planted! Let us believe in one anothers sincerity, for we may rest assured that each of our Brothers and Sisters deserves to be trusted more than we do. Turn your suspicions within and if you must suspect, suspect your own heart! But when you meet with those who have communed with you at this table, say within yourself, If such can deceive me and, alas, they may, then will I be content to be imposed upon rather than entertain perpetual mistrust of my fellow Christians.   
A third meaning of the assembling around the table is this, hearty fraternity. Our Lord, in sitting down at the table with His disciples, showed Himself to be one with them, a Brother, indeed. We do not read that there was any order of priority by which their seats were arranged. Of course, if the Grand Chamberlain at Rome had arranged the table, he would have placed Peter at the right hand of Christand the other Apostles in graduated positions according to the dignity of their future bishoprics! But all that we know about their order is thisthat John sat next to the Savior and leaned upon His bosom. And that Peter sat a good way offwe feel sure he was because it is said that he beckoned unto John. If he had sat next to him, he would have whispered to himbut he beckoned to himand so he must have been some way down the table, if, indeed, there was any down or up in the arrangement of the guests. We believe the fact was that they sat there on a sacred equality the Lord Jesus, the Elder Brother among themand all else arranged according to those words, One is your Master, even Christ, and all you are brethren. Let us feel, then, in coming to the table again at this time, that we are linked in ties of sacred relationship with Jesus Christ who is exalted in Heaven, and that through Him our relationship with our fellow Christians is very near and intimate.   
Oh, that Christian brotherhood were more real! The very word, brother, has come to be ridiculed as a piece of hypocrisy and well it may, for it is mostly used as a cant phrase and, in many cases means very little. But it ought to mean something. You have no right to come to that table unless you really feel that those who are washed in Jesus blood have a claim upon the love of your heart and the activity of your benevolence! What? Are you to live together forever in Heaven and will you show no affection for one another here below? It is your Masters new command that you love one anotherwill you disregard it? He has given this as the badge of ChristiansBy this shall all men know that you are My disciples

not if you wear a gold cross, butif you have love, one to another. That is the Christians badge of his being, in very truth, a disciple of Jesus Christ! Here, at this table, we find fraternity. Whoever eats of this sacred Supper declares himself to be one of a brotherhood in Christ, a brotherhood striving for the same cause, having sincere sympathy, being members of each other and all of them members of the body of Christ! God make this to be a fact throughout Christendom even now, and how will the world marvel as it cries, See how these Christians love one another!   
But this table companionship means even moreit signifies common enjoyment. Jesus eats and they eat the same bread. He drinks and they drink of the same cup. There is no distinction in the food items. What does this mean? Does it not say to us that the joy of Christ is the joy of His people? Has He not said, That My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full? The very joy that delights Christ is that which He prepares for His people! You, if you are a true Believer, have sympathy in Christs joyyou delight to see His Kingdom come, His Truth advanced, sinners saved, Grace glorified, holiness promoted, God exaltedand this also is His delight! But, my dear Brothers and Sisters and fellow professors, are you sure that your chief joy is the same as Christs? Are you certain that the mainstay of your life is the same as that which was His meat and His drink, namely, to do the will of the Heavenly Father? If not, I am afraid you have no business at this table! But if it is so and you come to the table, then I pray that you may share the joy of Christ. May you joy in Him as He joys in you and so may your fellowship be sweet!   
Lastly on this point, the feast at the one table indicated familiar affection. It is the childs place to sit at the table with its parents, for affection rules there. It is the place of honor to sit at the table. Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table. But the honor is such as love and not fear suggests. Men at the table often reveal their minds more fully than elsewhere. If you want to understand a man, you do not go to see him at the Stock Exchange, or follow him into the market, for there he keeps himself to himselfyou go to his table and there he reveals himself. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ sat at the table with His disciples. Twas a meal, twas a meal of a homely kindintimate communion ruled the hour. I am afraid, Brothers and Sisters, we have sometimes come to this table and gone away again without having had communion with Christand then it has been an empty formality and nothing more. I thank God that coming to this table every Sabbath, as some of us do, and have done for many years, we have yet for the most part enjoyed the nearest communion with Christ here that we have ever known, and have a thousand times blessed His name for this ordinance!   
Still, there is such a thing as only eating the bread and drinking the wine and losing all the sacred meaning thereof. Do pray the Lord to reveal Himself to you. Ask that it may not be a dead form to you, but that now, in very deed, you may give your heart to Christ while He shall show to you His hands and His side, and make known to you His agonies and death wherewith He redeemed you from the wrath to come! All this, and vastly more, is the teaching of the table at which Jesus sat with the twelve. I have often wondered why the Church of Rome does not buy up all those pictures by one of its most renowned painters, Leonardo da Vinci, in which our Lord is represented as sitting at the table with His disciples, for these are a contradiction of the Popish doctrine on this subject! As long as that picture remains on a wall and as long as copies of it are spread everywhere, the Church of Rome stands convicted of going against the teaching of the earlier church by setting up an altar when she, herself, confesses that before it was not considered to be an altar of sacrifice, but a table of fellowship at which the Lord did not kneel, nor stand as an officiating priest, but at which He and His disciples sat. We, at least, have no rebukes to fear from antiquity, for we follow and mean to follow the primitive method! Our Lord has given us commandment to do this until He comesnot to alter it, but just to do this, and nothing else, in the same manner, until He shall come again!   
III. We will draw to a close by asking WHAT FURTHER MAY BE INFERRED FROM THIS SITTING OF CHRIST WITH HIS DISCIPLES AT THE TABLE?   
I answer, first, there may be inferred from it, the equality of all the saints. There were here 12 Apostles. Their Apostleship, however, is not concerned in the matter. When the Lords Supper was celebrated after all the Apostles had gone to Heaven, was there to be any alteration because the Apostles had gone? Not at all. Believers are to do this in remembrance of their Lord until He shall come. There was no command for a change when the first Apostles were all gone from the Church. No, it was still to be the samebread and wine and the surrounding of the table until the Lord came. I gather, then, the equality of all saints. There is a difference in office, there was a difference in miraculous gift and there are great differences of growth in Grace, but still, in the household of God, all saints, whether Apostles, pastors, teachers, deacons, elders, or private membersbeing all equaleat at one table. There is but one bread, there is but one juice of the vine here!   
It is only in the Church of God that those words, so politically wild, can ever be any more than a dreamLiberty, Equality and Fraternity. There you have them where Jesus isnot in a republic, but in the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ where all rule and dominion are vested in Him! And all of us willingly acknowledge Him as our glorious Head and all we are brethren! Never fall into the idea that older Believers were of a superior nature to ourselves. Do not talk of Saint Paul, Saint Matthew and Saint Mark unless you are prepared to speak of Saint William and Saint Jane sitting over yonderfor if they are in Christ, they are as truly saints as those first saints were! And I think there may be some who have even attained to a higher saintship than many whom tradition has canonized! The heights of saintship are, by Grace, open to us all and the Lord invites us to ascend! Do not think that what the Lord worked in the early saints cannot be worked in you. It is because you think so that you do not pray for itand because you do not pray for it, you do not attain it! The Grace of God sustained the Apostlesthat Grace is not less today than it was then! The Lords arm is not shortened! His power is not straitened. If we can but believe and be as earnest as those first saints were, we shall yet subdue kingdoms and the day shall come when the gods of Hinduism and the lies of Mohammed and of Rome shall as certainly be overthrown as were the ancient philosophies and the classic idolatries of Greece and Rome by the teaching of the first ministers of Christ! There is the same table for you and the same food is there in emblemand Divine Grace can make you like those holy men, for you are bought with the same blood and quickened by the same Spirit! Only believe, for all things are possible to him that believes.   
Another inference, only to be hinted at, is that the needs of the Church in all ages will be the same and the supplies for the Churchs needs will never vary. There will still be the tableand the table with the same items upon itbread, still breadnothing more than bread for food. Still wine, nothing less than wine for drink. The Church will always need the same food, the same Christ, the same Gospel. Out, you traitors who tell us that we are to shape our Gospel to suit this enlightened 19th Century! Out, you false-hearts who would have us tone down the everlasting Truth of God that shall outlive the sun, moon and stars to suit your boasted culture which is but varnished ignorance! That Truth of God which of old was mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, is still mighty, and we will maintain it to the death! The Church needs the Doctrines of Grace today as much as when Paul, or Augustine, or Calvin preached them! The Church needs justification by faith, the substitutionary Atonement, regeneration and Divine Sovereignty to be preached from her pulpits as much as in days of yore! And by Gods Grace she shall have them, too!   
Lastly, there is in this Truth, that Christ has brought all His disciples into the position of table companions, a prophecy that this shall be the portion of all His people forever. In Heaven there cannot be less of privilege than on earth. It cannot be that in the celestial state, Believers will be degraded from what they have been below. What were they, then, below? Table companions. What shall they be in Heaven above? Table companions and blessed are they that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God! Many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. And the Lord Jesus shall be at the head of the table! Now, what will His table of joy be? Set your imagination to work and think what will be His festival of soul when His reward shall be all before Him and His triumph all achieved! Have you imagined it? Can you conceive it? Whatever it is, you shall share in itI repeat those wordswhatever it is, the least Believer shall share in it! You, poor working woman, oh, what a change for you, to sit among the princes of Christs palace of Glory, near to your Lord, all your toil and needs forever ended! And you, sad child of suffering, scarcely able to come up to the assembly of Gods peopleand going back, perhaps, to that bed of languishingyou shall have no pains there, but you shall be forever with the Lord! In the anticipation of the joy that shall be yours, forget your present troubles, rise superior to the difficulties of the hour and if you cannot rejoice in the present, yet rejoice in the future which shall so soon be your own!

We finish with this word of deep regretregret that many here cannot understand what we have been talking aboutand have no part in it. There are some of you who must not come to the table of Communion because you do not love Christ. You have not trusted Him. You have no part in Him. There is no salvation in what some people call sacraments. Believe me, they are but delusions to those who do not come to Christ with their heart! You must not come to the outward sign if you have not the thing signified. Here is the way of salvationBelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. To believe in Him is to trust Him. To use an old word, it is recumbencyit is leaning on Him, resting on Him. Here I lean on this platform rail. I rest my whole weight on this support before me. Do so with Christ in a spiritual senselean on Him. You have a load of sin, lean on Himsin and all! You are all unworthy, weak and, perhaps, miserable. Then cast on Him the weakness, the unworthiness, the misery and all! Take Him to be All-in-All to youand when you have thus trusted Him, you will have become His follower! Go on by humility to be His disciple, by obedience to be His servant, by love to be His friend and by communion to be His table companion!   
May the Holy Spirit so lead you, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 22:7-54.**

Verses 7-13. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where will You that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when you are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he enters in. And you shall say unto the good man of the house, the Master says unto you, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. The hour of Christs humiliation was drawing near, but He was still The Master. He had but to send His servants and His request was at once obeyedjust as He might have asked for more than 12 legions of angels and they would have been immediately placed at His disposal.

14-22. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of Him that betrays Me is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed! What consternation those sentences must have caused in that little company! Christ and His 12 Apostles alone present, yet one of them was about to betray his Lord!

23, 24. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. How strange that such a quarrel should be going on just then! Their Master was going out to betrayal and crucifixion for them, yet they were disputing about which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25-30 And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve. For which is greater, he that sits at the table, or he that serves? Is not he that sits at the table? But I am among you as He that serves. You are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father has appointed unto Me; that you may eat and drink at My table, in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. What folly and sin to quarrel about earthly precedence when such heavenly honors were awaiting them!

31, 32. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren. Trial would be general to all the ApostlesSatan has desired to have youbut the danger would be special to Peter on account of his tendency to presumptuous zeal. I have prayed for you. Your danger will be that after having transgressed, your faith will fail, so I have especially prayed about that. Where your greatest danger lies, there have I planted My batteries of prayer I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.

33. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You, both into prison, and to death. And I have no doubt that he thought he was ready to do all this! He spoke out of the fullness of his heart, but he did not know the weakness of his flesh. We are all too apt to promise great things and to fail in the fulfillment of them.

34-36. And He said, I tell you, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that you shall thrice deny that you know Me. And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked you anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that has a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. At first our Savior had great popularity among the people and, under the cover of this, His disciples were received with respect and kindness so that, though they went forth without purse or scrip, they lacked nothing. But now Christ warns them that there is to be a very different state of things. Jesus is about to die and people will not be ready to entertain them. They will need to have a purse and scrip of their own. They will constantly be in peril of their lives and they will now need the sword and the scrip. This is all that the Savior meant.

37. For I say unto you, that this which is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end. They are drawing to their close. I am about to be put to death as a transgressor and you will be treated as though you were the off-scouring of all things and were not fit to live because you are My followers.

38. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough. A smile must have passed over the Saviors face as He saw how they had misunderstood Him! He did not mean that they should literally carry swords, but that they should now have to go through an alien world and to meet with no friends or helpers. He evidently did not mean that they were to defend Him with the sword, for two such weapons would not have been enough against the Roman legionaries who were sent to seize Him! How apt they were to misconstrue and take literally that which He was accustomed to speak in figures, just as, to this day, some will have it that the bread on the Communion table is Christs body and the juice of the vine is His actual blood!

39, 40. And He came out, and went, as He was known to do, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that you enter not into temptation. There is a peculiar temptation coming upon you. I have taught you to pray every day, Lead us not into temptation, but tonight make very special use of that petitionPray that you enter not into temptation.

41-44. And He was withdrawn from them about a stones cast, and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Was He heard? Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, He was indeed heard! And especially in that part of His prayer, nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done. And that was the most vital part of His prayer for, as much as He shrank from that bitter cup, still more did He shrink from any thought of going contrary to the will of His Father! That ought to be the heart of all our prayers whatever we are asking for, chiefly and above all else this should be our crynevertheless not as I will, but as You will.

45, 46. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation. There must have been some very peculiar temptation about that night, that Christs disciples should have needed to be again and again commanded to pray this prayer!

47-50. And while He yet spoke, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betray you the Son of Man with a kiss? When they who were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. No doubt he meant to cut his head in two, but the sword slipped and merely took away his right ear.

51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer you thus far. And He touched his ear and healed him. There was no lasting mischief done, but, on the contrary, another instance given of the Divine Power of Christ. No other miracle of this kind is mentioned in ScriptureI mean the healing of a wound received by violence, the restoration of a member which had been cut offand Luke is the only Evangelist who mentions it! It has been thought that because he was a physician and had a quick eye for acts of healing, that he mentions that Christ touched the ear of Malchus and healed him.

52-54. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the Temple, and the elders, which were come to Him, Have you come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the Temple, you stretched forth no hands against Me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. Then they took Him and led Him, and brought Him into the high priests house. And Peter followed afar off.

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THE LORDS SUPPERA REMEMBRANCE OF JESUS   
NO. 2038

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, AUGUST 19, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**This do in remembrance of Me.   
Luke 22:19.**

THIS dothat is, take bread, give thanks, break it and eat ittake the cup, filled with the fruit of the vine, give thanks and drink you all of it. This do. Take care that you do just what Jesus didno more and no less. This act was done at a table where they had been eating the Passover. This act was performed at a common meal and was not a sacrifice, nor a celebration, nor a function, nor anything more than a significant eating of bread and drinking of wine after a devout fashion. This doas often as you break the bread and as often as you drink of the cup remember the Lord Jesus.

It is this that we are to do and not something else which may be supposed to grow out of it. He does not say, Do something else in remembrance of Mesomething which you may choose to do, retaining this act as the backbone of it. But this do. This which has just been donethis in all its simplicity, solemnity and intent.

Alas, how sadly have men forgotten this! The plain supper has not been a grand enough display. To break bread and to drink wine have not seemed to them to be sufficiently solemn, or sufficiently gorgeous and so they have added all kinds of rites and institutions. That which was only a table, they have made into an altar and that which was a supper and nothing more, they have changed into a celebration. They do not this but they do something else which they have devised and elaborated.

Imagine Paul or Peter attending mass and observing the various genuflectionsthe moving to and fro, the lifting up and the stooping down and all the various operations of the Roman priesthoodtoo many to describe! Paul would pluck Peter by the sleeve and say, Our Master did nothing like this when He took bread and gave thanks and broke it. Peter would reply, Very different this from the guest-chamber at Jerusalem! And Paul would add, Yes, indeed, my Brother, very different this from the time when the first Believers met together and broke bread and drank of the cup in common, in remembrance of their Lord.

Whatever other communities may do, be it ours, my Brethren, to stand fast by, This do in remembrance of Me. This, simply this, and nothing more and nothing less. Bread, not a wafer. Fruit of the vine, not the concoction of chemistry inflamed with fiery spirit. We use this fruit of the vine in a cup and that cup not reserved but partaken of by all. We have before us bread and that not worshipped, as at the elevation of the host but broken and eaten. The Lord and His disciples sat at a table and ate

it was a feast and not a sacrifice.

They reclined and did not kneel. So would we do, because He has said, This do, and not something else. Then, beloved Friends, we shall have to be very watchful upon another point, namely, that if we do this, we do it for the purpose for which He gave itnamely, in remembrance of Him. Jesus never said, This do, that you may offer an unbloody sacrifice. Where in Holy Scripture is there a syllable like it, either from our Lords own lips or from those of the Apostles?

He never said, Do this as the perpetual repetition of My death. To my mind the very thought is blasphemy, for our Lord claims to have finished His work and having died unto sin once, death has no more dominion over Him. The Jewish sacrifices, by reason of their insufficiency, were often repeatedbut this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. They blaspheme the sacrifice of Christ who imagine that any man, call him priest or not, can continue, repeat, or complete that sacrifice for sin.

It is finished and our Lord has gone into His Glory. Sin is put away by His bearing it in His own body on the tree. This do you in remembrance of Christ but not as continuing His sacrifice, which is forever perfect. I would not, for my part, on any account adopt the posture of kneeling in receiving the Lords Supper. If it does not actually imply worship of the bread and wine, it has a tendency to lead us away from remembrance of the Person Himself into an adoration of the elements.

The sacred supper was a feast, not a ceremony. The posture used at the feast was that of lying alongthe easiest posture into which they could put themselves. That is not congruous with our western custom. But the analogous position is that of sitting as much at ease as possible, which posture I would encourage you to persist in. Let us keep the feast as a feast but by no means kneel as though we were performing an act of worship before an altar.

Adoration of the invisible God is always right and proper. But if a certain posture seems to take away from the very essence of the festivaland a festival it isand if in addition it encourages superstitionthen kneel not but sit and do this in remembrance of Christ. Do this and nothing else and do it in remembrance and for no other purpose. And if any other posture looks another way, abjure it and keep close to that for which you have a precedent. The Church of Rome prizes the great picture by Leonardo di Vinci and in it all the Apostles are seated at the table. Is this at all like the mass? The supper is to be eaten in remembrance and for nothing more. But that, as we shall have to show you, is no little thing. This do in remembrance of Me.

Seeing that this is a feast of remembrance, let us ask ourselves a questionDo we know the Lord? This do in remembrance of Me. If you know nothing of a person. If you have had no acquaintance with him, you cannot remember him. Like a two-edged sword, this simple statement of truth sweeps through this audience tonight and divides it in two. Whether or not I may come to the Lords Table must depend upon whether I know the Lord Jesus, or do not know Him. If I am a stranger to Him, I may not come, for I may only come to remember Him and I cannot come to remember Him if I do not know Him. So it is a profanation of this blessed institution for any man to draw near to the table who does not know Christ already.

O Sirs, this is no saving ordinanceit was never meant to be. Its intent relates only to those who are saved. To know Jesus Christ is eternal life. And as you may not come without that knowledge, it is clear that you may not come unless you are saved. If any of you dream that your participation in your last moments in what is called the sacrament will save you, you are under a deep delusion. You may as well trust to the incantations of a witch as to the performance of any ceremony whatever, by whomsoever, in order to convey salvation to you. Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

And that is not worked by the corporeal act of swallowing bread and wine. You must be born again. And that is not effected by material substances, however consecratedit is the work of the Holy Spirit. Until you have believed in Jesus and so know Him and know His power within you and have come to personal dealings with Himinstead of getting a blessing from the ordinanceyou would eat and drink condemnation to yourselves, not discerning the Lords body. You are not capable of discerning that body if you have no faith. Let every man examine himself as to his knowledge of our Lord and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup. If you do not know Him you cannot remember Him and therefore hands off from the tokens of remembrance.

One wordone solemn word here, which I would speak with my whole soul. Rememberif you do not know Himthe day will come in which He will say to you, I never knew you. If there is no personal intimacy between you and Christ, He will disown you in the day when He comes in the glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him. It will be idle to say, Lord, we have eaten and drunk in Your presence and You have taught in our streets. If you do not know Him, He does not know you and there will be simply this reply to all your claim derived from external religionDepart from Me, you cursed, I never knew you.

But, dearly Beloved, if you do know the Lordand I trust that many here do, indeed, know Himthen it is certain that He has manifested Himself to you. Wondrous love! Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us? You have looked to Him. You have trusted in Him. You have lived upon Him. And all this because He has remembered you in your low estate. You remember Him with joy at this moment because of your past experience of Him. He is so dear to you that you must remember Him. You could not live without Him. He is all your salvation and all your desire. Well, then, it is for you to come to this festival and do this in remembrance of Him.

I. My first point shall be that THE MAIN OBJECT OF THE LORDS SUPPER IS EVIDENTLY THAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER CHRIST BY IT. Notice this particularly. It is not that you should call to mind a doctrine though I would not have you ignorant or unmindful of any Truth of God which the Spirit of God has revealed. Neither is it that you should be

mindful of a precept, though, Beloved, I would have you be careful that in all things you do your Saviors will. But the essence of your business at His table is, This do in remembrance of Me, that is, of Himselfof His own blessed Person.

Think not of Him as an abstraction! Dream not of Him as a mere idea! Do not merely contemplate Him as an historical Personage who was once before men and has now passed from off the canvas of history, as Confucius, Zoroaster, or the like. No. He ever lives and abides an actual, ever energetic force and power among men of every age. Jesus is of that Divine Nature which dwells perpetually in the present tensethe same yesterday, today and forever.

Beloved, as you live by Him, you must learn to live in Him and with Him, so as to know Him as a Friend with whom you are really familiar. The Christ of our dreams is but a dream. We need a real, living, personal Christ and it is Jesus Christ Himself that we have to remember tonight at this table.

And if we do this, we shall remember Him, first, with gratitude as our Savior. If I have anything of hope, I owe it all to You, incarnate God, Son of the Highest and Son of Mary, too. Your love, Your life, Your death, Your resurrection, Your power at the right hand of Godthese must be the pillars of my hope, if hope I have at all

*All our immortal hopes are laid   
In You, our Surety and our Head;   
Your Cross, Your cradle and Your Throne,   
Are big with glories yet unknown.*

He has saved us, Brethren, and loved us and blessed us with everlasting consolation within Himself. Oh, let us think of Him! The streams of which you drink are sweet. But think of the fountainhead. Your healing is a thing to sing of forever. Remember that you are healed by His stripes and think of those cruel scourges, those five wounds, that body covered with a bloody sweat, that dear, thorn-encircled brow, those eyes all dimmed with blood. Remember Jesus Himself, I pray you, and think neither of pardon, nor of justification, nor of sanctification apart from Him.

The streams of love I trace up to the fountain in the heart of Christ and remember Him tonight with deepest gratitude. Follow me, my Beloved, in this meditationyes, go before me and get nearer to the heart of your Redeemer. You must remember Him, next, with profound reverence as your living exampleyour living and reigning Lord. Know you not that as many of you as have been washed in His blood are henceforth Gods servants, even as He was? You are not to do your own will but His will who has redeemed you. His example is to you the embodiment of the Lords will. Do we not sweetly sing

*My dear Redeemer and my Lord,   
I read my duty in Your Word;   
But in Your life the Law appears   
Drawn out in living characters?*

It is yours, then, to remember the Lord Jesus that you may follow Him. In sickness, remember Him in His patience. When you are persecuted, remember Him in His gentleness. In holy service, remember Him with His burning zeal. In your times of solitude, remember Him and His midnight prayers. And when you are in public and have to bear witness, remember Him and His lion-like declarations of the Gospel. Remember Him so that He becomes your pattern and you are the reproduction of Himself and so the best memorial of Him.

Thus enabled by the Holy Spirit to remember your Lord with gratitude as your Savior, with reverence as your Lord, you will remember Him with confidence as your strength. He has not left you in this world to serve Him at your own charges and to bear His Cross alone. Remember Him, for He remembers you so as to be ever with you. Lo, I am with you always, says He, even unto the end of the world. Will you let Him be near you unnoticed and unremembered? Never say, I am lonely. You are not alone if you remember Jesus. O widow and fatherless one, say not, I am comfortless. He has said, I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Remember Him without ceasing. When you are strong, remember Him. For your strength comes from Him. When you are weak, remember him. For He can give you the help you need. Oh, that in all times and places Christ were All in All to us!

*Remember You! Your death, Your shame   
Our hearts sad load to bear!   
O memory, leave no other name   
But His recorded there!*

I would have the image of my Lord printed on the palms of my hands, that I might do nothing without Him. And I would have it painted on my eyes, that I might see nothing except through Him. It were better still to have it stamped upon my heart, that my very life might not beat except to the music of His name.

Remember Him, too, Beloved, as your great representative before the Throne of God. O Believer, at this very moment Heaven is yours! Jesus, your Forerunner, has taken possession of eternal glory in your name. The Throne of God has in the midst of it the glorified Man, the everlasting Son of God, who is the Covenant Head and Redeemer of His people. Never forget Him but keep your eye fixed upon Him, even as He keeps His eye upon you. He lives! The great Redeemer lives! He lives to plead for you.

Do not get into the habit of the Romish Church, which exhibits its dead Christ everywhere, or its baby Christ in the virgins arms. Jesus is neither of these at this time. He is not hereHe is risen. He lives! It is the living Christ that we believe in, the ascended Christ we are trusting in, the Christ to come that we are hoping for. There, where He pleads with all authority, is our grand hope, for He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.

Remember Him, once again, as soon to come. Perhaps while yet these lips are feebly fashioning halting words concerning wondrous mysteries, the trumpet may ring out above all earthly sounds. Even on this Sabbath night we may be called to behold the cloud upon which the Son of Man has come! Of that day and hour knows no man. And vain is the folly which is perpetually prophesying of that concerning which it knows nothing. Yet this is certainthe Lord Jesus will come to judge and to reign.

Behold, the Bridegroom comes.

He said long ago, Behold, I come quickly. He has been coming in haste ever since and He must be drawing very near. Now this is what we are always to rememberfor His coming will be the manifestation of His people as well as of HimselfHis coming will witness the reward of His saints as well as His own reward. Then shall He shine forth. And with Him, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Alas, we too much forget Him in all these aspects! I fear that we more easily forget than remember. And yet the remembrance of One so dear should be natural to us. Did you suspect, when you were first converted, that you could ever forget Him? Oh, no, you said

*Let the babe forget its mother,   
Let the bridegroom slight his bride;   
True to You, Ill love no other,   
Clinging closely to Your side.*

So we said but not so have we done. How often we act as if we had not the living Christ to run to! We fret as if Jesus were still lying in the sepulcher. We act as if we were going to live here forever and did not expect our Lord to come and take us away to be with Him. We act as if we had no Master but our own wanton will. We act despairingly as if we had no Shepherd to take care of us and no Savior who had redeemed us with His precious blood. Come, Brethren, this will never do. It is dishonorable to our Lord and disgraceful to ourselves. You see the reason why the supper should have been institutedour treacherous memories require it.

Let us gather to it as to a most needful, though right royal feast. For we have need to be reminded of our own dear Lord, who sweetly says to us, This do in remembrance of Me.

II. And now I take a second point. I want to show you all that THE MODE WHICH OUR LORD HAS ORDAINED OF HELPING OUR MEMORIES IS IN ITSELF EXCEEDINGLY STRIKING. It could not be more so. If I stood opposite to an altar garnished with paper roses and other childish things, and if I were to try and perform before you all: some of these cute little functions which are considered sacred by the followers of RomeI should need a long time to explain it all to you.

And when I had done my best, you would not be able to make heads or tails of it. I have stood and watched the Catholic priest at the altar with the earnest desire to see if there was anything to be learned and I could not learn anything. I could not make out what the ornamental person was at. I think I have read as much as most people about such things. But it does seem to me that if the behavior of the priest at the mass is a symbol, it is a very dark oneif it is intended to teach the peoplethey need to know a great deal before they can learn anything from it.

Surely to find anything in the mass, the devout must bring it with them, for there is nothing there. But if you look at yonder table, you will see before you simply bread and wine. And when you see us celebrate the ordinance tonight, you will notice that we do nothing but break the bread and eat it and pass round the cup and drink. All that is done is extremely simple. And the Savior seemed to wish for that simplicity, because He was Himself a very simple, unaffected, plain Man.

All the pomp that He ever had was when He rode through Jerusalem. But it was on a colt, the foal of an ass. Even then all the pomp consisted in thisthe people laid their garments in the road and strewed branches along the way in the excess of their joy. Golden ornaments and flowers and incense and acolytes are far removed from His plain and natural habits. Only fancy some of His disciples rising from the dead and stepping intowellSt. Pauls cathedral, which is called Protestant but is about as Popish as it very well can be.

Supposing they walked in thereJames and John togetherthe two sons of Zebedee. Perhaps stopping before some of the pretty things, James would wonderingly ask, John, where have we got? And John would say, We are in a chamber of imagery, a temple of idols. Our Lord Jesus would not be happy here. Why, says James, it is Pauls Church. Fetch him in. Surely when Paul came in and looked at all those images and decorations, he would say, Here I see another Gospel, which is not another. But there are some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.

That is putting it mildly. We are getting to have the idolatries of Rome set up in the Churches called national. And this is not done by those called outwardly and honestly, Romanists, but by those who are really so in their hearts, and yet wear the Protestant name. The Lord Jesus Christ was just a simple peasant at Galilee and the garment He wore was analogous to our common smock frock, a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. There was not a bit of stateliness or affectation about Him. And in all that He ordained you cannot find one single pompous ceremony.

His followers were baptized in waterwhere did He ordain salt and oil and spittle? Where did He bid them make the sign of the cross or set forth sponsors? His followers gathered for worship and sang hymns in His praise but where were their thuribles and their crucifers? Where were the stations of the cross? Where are all these things in the Scriptures? They are inventions of later and darker days, but Jesus knew nothing of themneither did His Apostles and those who followed them know nothing of such rubbish.

It was all plain telling of the dear love of God to men and of how men should love one another and love Jesus as their Saviorand that was it. Our Lord instituted this simple supper as the memorial of a plain, simple, honest Savior who had no gaudy tricks or priest craft about Him but was simply a Man among men.

But, next, our Lords Supper was intended to be very frequent. This do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. He has laid down no rule as to when we shall break bread. But the custom was certainly to break it on the first day of the week and I think oftener, for it seems to me that they broke bread from house to house. It was not a ceremony that required a minister or a priest. When Believers were together they broke bread in memory of Christany two or three of themand so they remembered Him.

It is most delightful, when traveling, to remember Christ in your own room, where two or three Brethren meet together. You have nothing to do but to break bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him. I know of nothing more sweet or more instructive than this Divine ordinance, which grows more impressive the oftener you attend to it. It ought to be frequent. Our Scotch friends were wrongas wrong could be in having it so seldombut they are mending. The frequency of it is to show how often we need to be reminded of our dear Lordfor we are prone to forget Him. We ought always to remember Him. And therefore an institution intended to keep up our memory should be frequently used.

Since He bids His disciples do it often, there is an instruction in it that we should constantly remember Him in our inmost souls. Inasmuch as He gave this for a memorial and for nothing else and gave it to all His disciplesbidding all His followers, until He should comedo this in remembrance of Him, it was to show that we all need to remember Him and all need help to do so. We are all forgetfulthe best Christian, highest in Divine Grace still needs this memorial, for he is apt to forget. Backsliding Christians need it, if possible, still more, that their failing memories may be revived. Sinners will do well to look upon it, for it may be that the memorials of the Lords death may cause them to remember their sins and turn to their Savior.

But to come a little closer to the table. I want you to notice that when our Lord bids us remember HimselfThis do in remembrance of Mehe gives us an ordinance which brings before us His death. Now, this, though it looks a very trite saying, is a very important point. The bread is His flesh, the wine His blood. They represent those two things. But they are separatedthe bread is not in the wine, nor the wine in the bread. The two in separate vessels represent a body with the blood separated from it and thus they are the token of death.

Very well, then. When the Lord says, This do in remembrance of Me, He gives us a memorial of His deathwhich plainly teaches us that the chief point of remembrance in our Lord Jesus is His death. He Himself regarded His death as the very center, heart and soul of what He would fix on our memories. Therefore those who say that His example is everything, or His teaching is everything, do greatly errfor when we remember Him, the first thing to be remembered is, He has redeemed us to God by His blood. Redeemer is the name to which our memories must most tenaciously cling. His blood, His redemption, His atonement, His substitutionary sacrifice are always to be kept to the front.

We preach Christ crucified, and you believe in Christ crucified. The reason of our success under God in this House of Prayer is that we have always preached Christ as the atoning sacrificethe sinners Substitute. And whosoever shall preach this boldly, clearly and thoroughly, putting it as the crown of the Gospel system, shall find God will bless His preaching. As for you, if you would have comfort and joy and peace, cling to the Cross. Look steadily to the accepted sacrifice. Never get away from your Lord Jesus. And when you remember Him, let His passion be the main thought which rises before you.

Next, notice another thingthis festival reminds us of the Covenant of Grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, while He bade us remember Himself, said of the cup, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. That is the word. Read testament, if you prefer it. But I feel sure you are nearer the sense when you read the new covenant in My blood. What, then? When I am to remember Jesus Himself, I am to take the cup which is the token of the Covenant. Ah, Beloved, you cannot know Christ thoroughly unless you understand the doctrine of the two Covenants and connect Him with the Covenant of Grace.

You must know that Covenant, ordered in all things and sure. For the cup is to remind you of it, by reminding you of Him. Christ is best seen when you see Him in His Covenant relationship. Do you all know about that Covenant? You know there was a Covenant made with Adam in which we were all included. But that Covenant failed. Father Adam broke it and we all lost the blessing which his obedience would have procured us. There is another Covenant made with the second AdamChrist Jesusand because He has kept the Covenant, all that are in that Covenant stand forever in Him.

As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive who are in Christ. The one Covenant ruined all that were in itthe second Covenant saves all that are in it. As we take that cup, we do own and accept joyfully our interest in that Covenant which was made with Christ, which is established on the sure foundation of His perfect obedience. Behold the blood of the EVERLASTING COVENANT! May the Lord Jesus be brought to your memory tonight as your Covenant Head and Surety. And as you drink of the cup, may you feel confidence and joy in Him who is your Surety!

May your soul sing, Although my house be not so with God. Yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure. This is all my salvation and all my desire. You see, then, the oceans of instruction which lie in one of the emblems. Lose none of it.

But there is yet one more thing. It is this. You are taught by this institution that the very best way in which you can remember Christ is by receiving Him. Oh, the sweetness of that Truth, if you will remember it when you come to this table! You are not asked to bring bread with you. It is here. You are not asked to bring a cup with you. It is here already provided. What have you to do? Nothing but to eat and to drink. You have to be receivers and nothing more.

Well, now, whenever you want to remember your Lord and Master, you need not say, I must do something for Him. No, no! Let Him do something for you. Take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord

*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.*

Lord, I cannot love You as I would love You but I can accept Your love. Let Your love drop into my heart just now. Lord, I cannot serve You as I would but I adore You because You do become my Servant and wash my feet as

You did your disciples. Lord, I cannot bring You coals of fire out of my chilly heart. But here is my heart, come and cast the coals of fire of Your own Divine love into it!

O my Brethren, come and receive! Come and RECEIVE! I think this is a very sweet intimation to those of you who feel as if you had nothing to come with. You do not need to come with anything except your hunger and thirst. A man that is invited to a meal need not say, Oh but I have no bread. You are asked to a royal feast and you need not bring bread with you. He that invites you to His table will provide you with all you want. And when you desire to remember Him, your surest and best plan is to enjoy the good things which He sets before you. I have thus shown how suitable the ordinance is to help our memories.

III. Now, lastly, THE OBJECT FOR WHICH WE ARE TO COME, NAMELY, TO REMEMBER CHRIST, IS ONE WHICH IS IN ITSELF MOST INVITING. Let me show you what I mean. There is one here who cries, I have forgotten my Savior. I did love Him. I hope my love has not quite gone but I seem to be very cold. Alas, I have forgotten my Lord.

Where should you go to have that love revived and refreshed? Should you not come where you will be helped to remember Him? He says, This do in remembrance of Me. You say that you have forgotten your Lord. Come and remember Him again. Do not stay away but come with all the more eagerness. Remember Him as you did at firstwhen you came laden with guilt and full of fearsand when you just cast yourself upon your Lord and found peace. Come and rest in Him again.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, you that are afraid that your first profession was a mistakecome and begin again at the table. We have got into midsummer and the plants put out the midsummer shootyou knowI want you to put out new shoots also. What? Do you say that it is long since you thought of growing? It is time to think of it again. If the spring shoot seems to have grown old, now is the time for a midsummer shootfor a new beginning. Begin with Christ all over again. Repent and do your first work. This do in remembrance of Me. Does not that exactly suit you who fear that you have for a while forgotten Him?

Oh but I feel so weak. Yes but when a little child is very weak, there is still one thing which it can surely doit can remember its mother. Memory is often quickened by our needit is well when our sense of weakness makes us remember where our great strength lies. Remember, then, the Lord who is your strength and your songfor He also has become your salvation. Now, you poor little weak ones, where are you tonight? How gladly would I help you. But what better help can you desire than that which your Lord sets before you in these dear memorials of His death!

I know that some of you have been cruelly pushed about of late. The strong ones have said sharp things to you. Your Lord invites you to a cheering exercise which shall help you to forget the poor behavior of the proud. Poor, timid, trembling, half-believing, half-doubting One, and yet truly the Lordscome to the table, come to remember your loving Redeemer! It is painful to remember yourself but it will be sweet to remember Him. Oh, you say, I cannot forget Him. I am glad you cannot. Still, come here and indulge your memory tonight and say

*Gethsemane, can I forget,   
Or there Your conflict see,   
Your agony and bloody sweat,   
And not remember You?   
When to the Cross I turn my eyes,   
And rest on Calvary,   
O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice,   
I must remember You.*

There is one more thing I am going to say and I feel half ashamed to say it. Some professedly Christian people urge that they cannot come to the table because there are certain persons there who, in their judgment, should not be allowed to come. Is the Lords Table to be a judgment seat, where we are to revise the verdict of the Church? I cannot, said one to me, join a Church, because I cannot find one that is perfect. No, I said and if you do not join a Church till you do find a perfect one, you must wait till you get to Heaven. And, besides, my dear Friend, if you ever find a perfect Church they will not take you in. For I am sure they would not be perfect any longer if they did. One sickly sheep would then have passed into the fold. So it is idle for you to be looking out for perfection.

But there is a person at communion who acted inconsistently. That is highly probable. And he may be wearing your coat and looking out of your eyes. If you know of any case of open sin, let the elders of the Church be informed and it will be dealt with tenderly and firmly. In so large a Church as this there may be cases of evil living not known to the overseers of the flock. But we invite the co-operation of all in maintaining the purity of the entire body and we trust that we have it. But now, really, what have you to do with the faults of others when you are remembering Christ Jesus?

Surely this is the most unseasonable time for harsh judgments, or indeed for any judgments. I know many a Brother with whom I could not agree in certain points but I agree with him in remembering the Lord Jesus. I could not work with him in all things. But if he wants to remember Jesus, I am sure I will join him in that. It will do him good and it will do me good, to think of Jesus. That dear name is so sweet to me that I will remember Jesus with the poorest, meanest and most imperfect of mortals.

I am never happier than when I am in your midst, my beloved Brethrenand we all sit around the table, because I think of all the Lord has done for you and for me. Why, it is not worth while going to Heaven alone. A little lost child sits down on the doorstep of a West end mansion and cries because it is so lonelyis that to be our position in Heaven? Are we to take no friends there with us? Who wants to be solitary in the New Jerusalem? But oh, to come with all of you to the table and to look into the faces of all Gods people and to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is in each one of them!

They are a poor lot, full of mistakes, full of errors, full of infirmities, just like their minister. But the Lord has loved them and bought them with His blood. A precious Christ He isnot only to have saved me but tens of thousands of His saints everywhere. For there are people of His in all Churches, even in the Churches that are most full of error. He has

redeemed, by His precious blood, His own elect in the midst of them all. Why, the sight of you helps me to recollect Jesus and to get a better idea of Himboth your Christ and my Christ! And not our Christ alone but the Christ of all the myriads redeemed by His blood.

Shall I then set myself up for a judge and say, No, I will not remember my Lord because one of the Brethren does not behave properly? What would you say to your child if he said, Father, I shall not come to see you on your birthday. I shall not join with the rest of the family in the usual festival? Why not? Because my brother is not what he ought to be. And till he mends his ways, I shall not keep your birthday. Your father would say, My dear son, is that any reason why you should not remember me? Surely I am not to blame for what your brother does. Come to the feast and think of me.

So do I say to you if you have any personal angers and differencesdo not smother them but end them. Do not come to the table till you have got rid of them, for you have no right to come. But end all wrath at once. Get rid of every ugly feeling you have towards everybody in the world and love all Believers in Christ for Christs sake. Then come to this table and you will find it will help you to remember your Master as you shall join with others who remember Him. I think I may say that you will not be likely to see anybody at the table worse than yourself. So come along and let not pride keep you back. May Gods infinite mercy bless the Lords Supper to the Lords people!

And as for those that cannot come and remember Him because they do not know Him, may they, this night, go home and seek Him. And if they seek Him, He will reveal Himself to them. If you desire Christ, Christ desires you. If you have a spark of love to Him, He has a furnace full of love to you. And if you want to come to Him and trust Him to save you, come and welcome. The Lord bless you, for His names sake! Amen.

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[THIS sermon is issued, not because Mr. Spurgeon has been unable to preach on the Sabbath but because he has gone into the country for the week and so was unable to prepare for the press the sermon of last Lords Day. That sermon will appear, if the Lord wills, with that of the following Sabbath next week. There has been a request for a sermon upon the Lords Supper and here it is.]

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SERVUS SERVORUM   
NO. 2514

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, APRIL 25, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 6, 1885.

**I am among you as He that serves.   
Luke 22:27.**

OBSERVE, dear Friends, that our Lord, in order to impress a great practical Truth of God upon His 12 Apostles, refers them to Himself. He very often does so, quoting His own doings as an example to His servants. Does not this fact give us a hint that there is someone greater than a man here, for no mere man, modest and true and right-minded, would continually make himself the object of imitation! We would not consider it right if we found Abraham, or Moses, or David constantly pointing to himself as an example. Such a course is very proper for certain persons in certain special cases as, for instance, Paul might occasionally allude to himself when he was addressing his own converts, but even then rarely doing itand doing it with extreme diffidence. But our Lord acts thus very often and with the utmost possible naturalness! Neither did it ever suggest itself to anyone of His people that there was anything immodest in His doing so. Such an idea never occurred to us because we have always recognized in Him something which entitled Him to speak thus, something which rendered it quite right that He should so speak. He is Master and Lord! He is very God of very God! He is perfect! He is out of the lists of ordinary men, He rises like a lone Alp above us all and when He speaks as He does in the words before us, the very fact that He does speak without our feeling any objection thereto proves that there is a something altogether unique about His Character, and that something, I believe, is the existence of perfection, and the evidence of Deity combined with His Humanity.

At any rate, dear Brothers and Sisters, this is a matter of fact in our holy faith, that the best lesson for a Christian to learn is to be learned from Christ, Himself. I am afraid that in these days some are preaching in a lop-sided way. Years ago Christ was set forth almost exclusively as an example. Concerning the Imitation of Christ was the great matter of public discourseand many books were written upon that important theme. But, inasmuch as in those days they forgot and undervalued the Sacrifice of Christ and did not preach Justification by faith in His precious blood, their preaching was but dim and inefficient and Christ was not largely imitated, after all, although men were bid to imitate Him. Now, we preach His sacrificein many of our places of worship the Atonement of Christ is very clearly proclaimed and the plan of salvation by virtue of His precious blood is very widely declared with more or less of clearness, for which I thank God. But we must take care that we do not forget that Christ is our Example as well as our Atonementand that, while by His death we live, the life which we live is to be conformed to the life of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. He did not merely come to save us from the guilt of sin, but He came to save us from the power of sin. He does not merely bring us pardon, but He brings us holiness and He comes to make us like Himself. This, indeed, is the end of His life and of His deaththat we might grow into His image and become truly replicasrepetitions of Christ according to our degree, among the sons of men.

I want, therefore, to say to you who are Christs peopleAs He has saved you, follow Him! If you are washed in His blood, be like He! If, indeed, He is your Master and Lord, obey Him! In all that you do, ask yourselves this question, What would Christ have done under these circumstances? And then act according to the answer which Gods Word and your own conscience give you. As He is, so are we, also, in this world. And if we fulfill our destiny to the glory of God and the honor of our Redeemer, we shall make men see in our own proper persons what Christ was when He was hereholy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Christ always points us to Himself. If He bids us trust Him, He also bids us follow Him. If He bids us hope in Him, He also bids us obey Him and be like He is. And they who will not have His holiness shall not have His Atonement! If we do not care to be like He is, we cannot be saved by Him.

The particular evil at which our Lord aimed when He uttered the words of our text was the evil which is so common in the Church, even down to the present day, that is, each man seeking to be somebody. We are all born great the first timeit is only when we are born the second time, born from abovethat we come to be little. When we were born the first time, we were so great that we were really nothingbut when we are born a second time, we are so little that we are everything in Christ! At first, self seeks to gain the mastery. It has a head that must wear the crown and feet that must be shod with silver slippers. Self will wear no sackcloth, it must be clad in silk at the very least. Self always exalts itself above all its fellowsit even pines after the Throne of God, for self has the ambition of Lucifer and will never be satisfied, however high it mounts. Now, our Savior wants, in His disciples, that self should be crushed, that all desire to be great should be quenched and that, instead of all of us wanting to be masters, we should see which of us can be servants! If we are as Christ was, we shall catch the spirit which made Him say, I am among you as He that serves.

I. To that point I bend all my strength just now and, first, I want to speak a little upon our Lords position among His own followersI am among you as He that serves.

The 12 Apostles came together to the Last Supper. There was usually a servant or slave in the room to wash the feet of the guests, but there does not appear to have been such a person on that occasion. Peter did not offer. Even John did not think of it. Thomas was probably considering who ought to do it and Philip, the arithmetician of the Apostles, was calculating how much water it might takebut nobody offered to do it. Everybodys business, you know, is nobodys business, so nobody offered to wash anybodys feet. They had already taken their positions, reclining about the table when, without any suggestion from anybody else, the Master Himself rose from their midst, laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself with it, poured water into a basin and went from one to anotherand washed their feet. After He had done that, and was again reclining with them, He said to them, in effect, I am among you as the slave, the domestic who does the most menial work. You see that I am. They could not contradict it, for He had actually and literally taken that position among them.

But, dear Friends, this act of our Lords was no novelty! What He did literally that evening, He had been doing ever since they had formed a community! He was always the servant of them all. He was constantly looking out for their interests and laying Himself out to do them good. They did not come to Him to bring Him anythingthey came to receive from Him. They did not come to teach Him, or even to comfort Him with their company. They all came for what they could get from Him and to learn the Truth of God from His lips, some of them hoping to be led by Him to a kingdom which they did but dimly understand, but they were all, as it were, sitting at a table all the time they were with Him, being fed with heavenly and spiritual food. And He was all the while their servant, washing their feet, bearing with their ill manners, sweetly correcting their mistakes and always patient, notwithstanding their slowness of learning. He could truly say, not only of that supper night, but of His whole life, I am among you as He that serves.

When Christ thus spoke, He called Himself not merely a servant, one that serves, but specially the servantthe deacon, the attendant, is really the word. I am among you as the waiter. You are the gentlemen who sit at the table and I am the servant who waits upon you. Our Lord meant to remind the Apostles by this act that He had always taken among them the very lowest place. He had never exercised any sort of domineering authority over them, He had never been exacting in His demands upon them. He had never sought His own comfort at their expense, but He was always meek and lowly in heartalways seeking their welfare rather than His own. There was not one of them but knew that this was true. He was less than the least among them, although He was greatest of them all! As the old writers used to say, He was servus servorum, the Servant of servants.

A servant, you know, is one who has to care for other people. When she gets up in the morning, it is not her work to look to her own comfort. The true servant in the house glides along quietly, watching to see what can be done for the comfort of all the inhabitants. Such a person forgets herself, or himself, in thinking of others. This is just what our Lord Jesus didHe never seems to have given Himself a thought, He was only thinking of the poor multitudes that gathered about Him and of the sick folk that He could heal and of the humble few that came into His more intimate acquaintance, and called Him Lord and Master. Wonderfully unselfish was He whose whole care was for others and who could truly say to His disciples, I am among you as He that serves.

A true servant ignores his own will. He does not do what he would like to dohe does what his master tells him to do. He is engaged as a servant and he lives as a servant. And he obeys the will of him who has employed him. Was it not just so with our Lord in the whole course of His life? I came not, He said, to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. From His childhood, He must be about His Fathers business and, until His last hour, when He could say to His Father, It is finished, He never had two businesses in hand. His one sole concern was to take upon Himself the form of a servant, to become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Beloved, I cannot imagine a better picture of a servant than the full length portrait of Him who is truly Lord of All! King of kings is a title full of majesty, but Servant of servants is the name which our Lord preferred when He was here below!

A servant is one who bears patiently all manner of hardness. Many servants have had to endure a great deal of hardship and, sometimes, much misjudgment and harshness. But this blessed Servant of the Father bore cold, nakedness, hunger and even death in His servitude. And though He was despised and rejected by the very men whose good He sought. Though He was maltreated, maligned and slandered, yet He still never turned aside. even for self-defense. He held on in His holy and sacred course as Servant of all. I do not know how to put this Truth of God as I would like to, but I want you to recognize that He, who this day sits on the highest Throne in Glory amid a hierarchy of angels, adored of blood-redeemed spirits, was among us here below as the Servant of His own servants! Your Blessed Lord, whose face outshines the sun at noonday, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, who is this day Head over all things to His Churchyour Lord, who shall shortly come with myriads of saints and angels to judge the world in righteousness, was, when He was here, nothing more than thisHe that serves. That was His position.

II. I have entrenched upon what I meant to make the second subject of discourse, namely, THE WONDER OF THIS POSITION, for it is among the greatest of all wonders that Jesus, the Lord of All, should have become the Servant of All!

Very briefly let me suggest to your minds that the marvel was all the greater as He was Lord of All by nature and essence. Our Lord Jesus was Divine. He was God over all, blessed forever, Son of the Highest, that Eternal Word, without whom was not anything made that was made. Yet to His disciples He says, I am among you as He that serves. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of Grace and truth. Truly, it was a marvelous condescension on our Lords part!

Remember, too, that He was infinitely wise. There was never another teacher like Christ, for He could answer every question and solve every difficulty. Those piercing eyes of His looked through every secret place and revealed the darkest mysteries of human life. Then, surely, they set Him on high in the church of His day, they made Him professor, they paid Him every homage! But, did they? No. He said, Though I am Rabboni, the Great Master, yet I am among you as He that serves. Is this how you treat your wise men, O you gracious ones? Do you set them to wash the disciples feet?

Recollect, also, that He was immaculately pure and incomparably good. There was never such another Man among all the sons of men! There can never be another Character so charming as His. All perfections meet in Him to make up one perfection! All the sweets of the highest morality and spirituality are blended in Him to make one perfect and essential sweet! Yet He is among us as the One that serves. There was a certain preacher who cried out in his sermon, O virtue, if you were once embodied, and should come down among mankind, all men would worship you! But see, here is Virtue perfected and Incarnateand down among us serving as a Servant! This is how man treats the Perfect Oneand it is a great wonder.

Besides that, the Lord was our superlative Benefactor. He was here simply to bless us. Eyes, lips, hands, feetall scattered benedictions. He was a sun in the midst of human darkness. His every thought was a beam of light and comfort for mankind. Yet He could say, I am among you as He that serves. In order to be our Benefactor, He takes the very lowest place and men were content to keep Him there and let Him wash their feet. Oh, tis strange, tis passing strange, tis amazing, yet true!

It is amazing, too, that He should be a servant among such poor creatures as they were. I have heard of some who have been willing to wash the feet of saintly men, but these disciples were a band of poor sinners. I have heard of some who would have been willing to perform menial offices for great philosophers, or men of high dignity. But these disciples were mainly a company of Galilean fishermen who had lately left their boats and nets, or peasants fresh from the soil of their fields full of all the faults and infirmities natural to men of their class. Yet our blessed Lord said to them, I am among youyou fishermen, you countrymen, you poverty-stricken menI am among you as He that serves. O gracious Master, You were humble, indeed, and it did well become You! You seem, despite Your ineffable Glory, to be quite at home when You are acting as slave to Peter and James and John, taking their soiled feet into Your pure hands and washing them clean.

III. Now, in the third place, let us inquire what is the explanation of this wonder? Why did our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was among the twelve, take the place of Him that serves? Why did He, who was Lord of All, become Servant of All?

First, because He was so truly great. The little man is always jealous lest he should be treated as little. The little selfish being tries to wriggle himself into notice somehow or other. He needs to be observed and then he wants to do something for which he may have a vote of thanksand he would like it to be proposed in very special terms. Do you expect him to wash any mens feet? Well, he might wash the feet of gentlemen, in a golden basin, with a crystal basin, rose water, and a damask napkin. Oh, yes, my lord would do it that way very prettily and think a great deal of his condescension! But actually to take the feet of poor men into his hands and to wash themto really do some such service to those who need ithe could not manage that! He is so little that he could not rise to such a dignified position. Brothers and Sisters, it was because our Lord was so superlatively great that He could do little things, that He could stoop and be lowly. It is in the nature of such a great heart as His to be willing to do any necessary thing for those whom it loves.

But the second answer to the question is this. Our Lord was among men as One that serves because He had such immeasurable love. Love is always happiest when it can do something for its object. It is no toil for love to labor for that which it lovesit would be slavery to it to be withheld from so delicious an exercise! Look at the mother with her child even with all the many trials she has with itit is so dear that she counts it a relaxation rather than a bondage to take care of her own beloved offspring! And have you never known a loving woman sit by the bedside of her sick husband? The nights have been long and dreary but she has not left him whose life was ebbing away. The candle has burnt low and the daylight has peeped in through the blinds, but there she is still sittingand unless she verily faints away through sheer exhaustion, you cannot get her from that sick room, for love holds her there and keeps those weary eyelids from dropping down and makes her feel it to be a sad joy, a grief but a pleasure to be near him whom she loves.

And our blessed Lord was so full of love to us that nothing seemed a stoop to Him. For the joy that was set before Him, the joy of blessing His people, He endured the Cross, despising the shame. Will I wash their feet? He seemed to say, that is very little. I will wash them altogether in my hearts blood. I will bear their sins in My own body on the tree and will be, indeed, among them as He that serves to the fullness of a sacred service such as never was exhibited before or since. It was love, it was wondrous love, excessive love, that would not let Him stay in Heaven amid the splendors of His royalty, but made Him come to earth, amid the sorry surroundings of penury and grief, that He might save us!

IV. Now, lastly, I am coming to what I have been driving at all the while and that is, THE IMITATION OF OUR LORDS HUMILITY. I suggest to you at once the power by which you shall learn to imitate your Lord. If you get His love in your hearts, you will always long and wish to take up a position like His and be among your fellow Christians as one that serves.

If we are to imitate Christ, it will involve, dear Friends, that we who are saved by Him should joyfully undertake the very lowest service. If there is a door to be kept, if there is a path to be swept, let us aspire to that dignity. If there is a class of men more degraded than another, let us wish to go to them. If there is a rank of women more fallen than another, let us pray and labor especially for them. If there are any members of the Church that are more neglected and despised than others, let us be most attentive to them. If there is somebody who really is quite a worry when we visit her, let us visit her. If there is a person who really is so exceedingly poor and, perhaps, so very dirty that it takes a good deal of selfdenial to go and sit by her bedside when she is sick, let us go. If we are to be like Christ, we shall all be eager for the lowest work, we shall all be seeking who can take the lowest place. If you want this pulpit, dear Friends, you can have it if you can fill the position better than I do. But then, perhaps, you might not! But there will not be much competition for the lowest place. If you become a candidate for that position, you will get it. There are not likely to be too many applicants for the post and, by degrees, one and another will edge out, so I recommend you, if you really want the place that Christ would have you take, that is, the very lowest position in the Church of God, to go in for it, for you will get it.

You have all heard of David Brainerd, the great missionary to the Red Indians. He was seen, one day, lying in his hut, teaching a little Red Indian child to say, a, b, c. Somebody said, What? Is this David Brainerd teaching that little dunce his letters? Yes, he said, I have prayed God that, as long as I live, I might be useful. And now I am too weak to preach, I am too feeble to do anything else but just teach this little child the alphabet. And I shall keep on doing something for my Master till I die. So, dear Friend, if you cannot teach the thousands, teach two or three! If you could not even venture on two or three, yet teach your own child, or look after somebody elses child, some gutter child, some Arab of the street! Be as your Master would have you be, as he that serves, by seeking to fill the very lowest office in His Church.

Show the same spirit, also, in being at all times lowly in your esteem of yourself. You know the gentleman who is always being insulted, I know him very well, indeedyou could not wink an eye at him but you would insult him! He has a very thin skinyou must mind how you think when you are near himhe is always being treated in a disrespectful manner. Nobody ever seems to treat him as he ought to be treated in the place where he now is. If he were to get among people of greater sense and better education, he says that there he should be respected. I almost wish he would gostill, I must not say so, because, perhaps, we can mend him if we let him stay and all of us seek to do him good. But, Brothers and Sisters, do not any of you be of that character, but be among those sensible persons of whom a disrespectful thing could not be said because they would not treat it as disrespectful!

Some time ago a man said a very unkind and untrue thing of me, and I felt quite pleased because I thought that if he had known me better, he might have said something worse. But I was quite satisfied to take the bad thing as it was. I never told anybody about it and I do not intend to, for it really did not trouble me at all. As far as I remember, I slept as long that night as I had done before. There is no use in believing that you are such an important person that the wind must not blow on you, because the wind will blow on you! Do you not find it so? Well, suppose that we do not have any dignity. Suppose that we, each one, say, I am among you as he that serves. Now, then, find as much fault as you please. In wet weather, one of the most useful things in a house is the doormat and a doormat never complains of persons wiping their boots on it because it was put there for that very purpose. And if you are quite willing to let people wipe their dirty boots on you, you will come to feel, What a capital man I am! How beautifully that man cleaned his boots on me just now! He found great fault with me, but he was not finding fault with somebody else just then. It did not hurt me and it might have hurt somebody else, so I am doing good service in bearing what, after all, does not so much offend me now I have brought my mind to it. So, have a lowly estimate of yourself, for then you will be like Christ, who said, I am among you as He that serves.

Furthermore, Brothers and Sisters, may I earnestly inculcate upon Christians that we should always be seeking to do good to others, for that is what Christ meant. He made His disciples recline at the table, but He waited on them. It was His high office to be the lowest among them! Now, Christian people, look out for opportunities of doing good to others. I do not know, says one, that I get much good out of the Church. But that is not the point! The question for you to ask is, How much good have I done to the Church? for, after all, our being here is not with a view of getting so much out of it, but putting so much into it. The Christian mans way of living is by giving, for he realizes that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

If you really want to serve somebody, there is a wide field open to you. You need not go to Africa to do it. You can stay in your own house and serve somebody there. It seems to me that a Christian should be trying from morning to night what he can do to bless other people for their good. It should be the mothers ambition to make the children happy and to train them for Christ. It should be the fathers wish that all under his care in the house should enjoy being at home and should think that there never was such a home as he makes. It should be the girls wish that brothers and sisters at home should be glad to think that Mary is there, for she is quite a light in the house. And the brother should make it his joy to do everything that can minister to the comfort of his mother and sisters. In fact, this is the point wherein Christians would carry Christianity on to a greater triumphif they, each one, sought the good of others.

But some are so grumpy, so snappy, that they cannot do even a good thing without doing it badly! If they do you a favor, you feel that it is just the same as if they had offended you. Let it not be so with us, dear Friends! Let us seek to exhibit an amiable, gracious, loving spiritnot by pretending to have itbut by

really loving others and desiring their present, their future and their eternal welfare. This is what Jesus did when He said, I am among you as He that serves. Let us do the same as far as in us lies. In a word, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us imitate our Lord Jesus Christ in being willing to bear and forbear even to the end. The true Christian is the man or woman who, when he is reviled, reviles not againwhen he is falsely accused, scarcely thinks it worth his while to answerwho often foregoes his rightsand is willing to do so. He or she is one who is not for self, not even for justice to himself, but is willing to bear and suffer wrong rather than inflict wrong.

Someone, perhaps, says that I am teaching you hard lessons. Yes, but if you are the children of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the kind of lesson that you will love and try to practice! And as you become proficient in it, there will be a peculiar sweetness stealing into your spirit. I pray God that we may have the mind of Christ, that we may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. If any treat you ill, love them all the more! If they make you angry, try to get over it as quickly as possible. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Pay them off the next day by doing them some kindness which you would not have done if they had not treated you badly. Always try to speak as well of everybody as you can. When you hear anything against them, cut it in halvesand cut each half into two more halvesand then throw all away as if you had never heard it! Go through the world with the full conviction that there are some good people in it and that if there are not, it is time that you should be one and should help to increase the number by exhibiting a holy, humble, gentle, gracious spirit. If you have this mind in you, your Lord will be glorified and men will say, Is this a Christian? Then let me be a Christian, too!

God help you to do so, for Christs sake! Amen.   
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 22:1-39.**

Verses 1, 2. Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scroll sought how they might kill Him; for they feared the people. Dastardly fear often drives men to the greatest crimes. He who is not brave enough to be master of his own spirit and to follow the dictates of his own conscience may do, before long, he little knows what. Because of the fear of the people, the chief priests and scribes were driven to compass the death of Christ by craft and to bring Him to His death by the cruel betrayal of Judas, one of His own Apostles.

3-6. Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray Him unto them in the absence of the multitude. Was it not a sad thing that the betrayer of Christ should be one of the twelve? Yet deeply trying as it must have been to the heart of Christ, there is something useful about even that horrible transaction! It says to all the professing Church of Christ, and it says to us who claim to be Christs followers, Do not think yourselves safe because you are in the visible Church. Do not imagine that even holding the highest office in the Church can prevent you from committing the basest crime. No, for here is one of the twelve Apostles, yet he betrays his Master!

Sometimes we have found this betrayal to be a source of comfort. I have myself desired, in receiving members into the Church, to be very careful, if possible, only to receive good men and true. Yet, though pastors and elders of the Church may exercise the strictest watch, some of the worst of men will manage to get in. When that is the case, we say to ourselves, No new thing has happened to us, for such a sinner as this marred the Church from the very beginning. Here is Judas, when Christ, Himself, is the Pastor, when the twelve Apostles make up the main body of the Church. Here is Judas, one of the twelve, ready to betray his Master for the paltry bribe of 30 pieces of silverthe price of a slave. Yes, we might have been put out of heart in building up the Church of God if it had not been for this sad but true narrative concerning Judas and his betrayal of our Lord.

7, 8. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. Notice how carefully our Lord respected the ordinances of that dispensation so long as it lasted. The Passover was an essential rite of the Jewish faith and our Lord, therefore, duly observed it. Learn here, dear Brothers and Sisters, to esteem very highly the ordinances of Gods House! Let Baptism and the Lords Supper keep their proper places. You do them serious injury if you lift them out of their right places and try to make saving ordinances of them. But, in avoiding that evil, do not fall into the opposite error of neglecting them! What Christ has ordained, it is for His people to maintain with care until He comes again. And if He kept the Passover even when, in Himself, it was already on the point of being fulfilled, let us keep up the ordinances which He has enjoined upon us. If any of you have neglected either of them, let me remind you of His gracious words, Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness, and, This do you, in remembrance of Me.

9-13. And they said unto Him, Where do You want us to prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when you are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he enters in. And you shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master says unto you, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready. And they went, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. Observe in this passage an amazing blending of the human and the Divine! No mention is made of either as a matter of doctrine, but incidentally our Lords Divinity and Humanity are most fully taught. Here is Christ so poor that He has not a room in which to celebrate the most necessary feast of His religion. He has made Himself of no reputation and He has no chamber which He can call His own. Yet see the Godhead in Him! He sends His messengers to a certain house and tells them to say to the good man of the house, Where is the guest chamber? It all turns out just as He said it would be and He is welcomed to this mans best room and to the furniture thereof. Jesus speaks here as did His Father when He said to Israel in the olden time, Every beast of the forest is Mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills. All the guest chambers in Jerusalem were really at Christs disposalHe had but to ask for them and there they wereall ready for Him! Here we see the majesty of His Deity but, inasmuch as He had no room that He could call His own, we also see the humility of His Manhood.

14-16. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. This was to be His last meal with His disciples before He died. And He had looked forward to it with great desire. It was a most solemn occasion and yet to Him a most desirable one. May something of the Masters desire overflow into your hearts, Beloved, whenever you are about to partake of the sacred feast which He instituted that night!

17-20. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you. Do you see how this new memorial was blended with the Passover, how it melted into that social meal which formed part of the paschal celebration? There was a cup, then bread, and then the cup after supper, so there was a gracious melting of the one dispensation into the other. We see our Lords wisdom in thus leading His children on from step to step, without a break, conducting them from one line of service to another and a still higher one.

21. But, behold, the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table. This was a sad and solemn fact, yet it has often been so since that night. The nearer to Christ, the farther from Himso has it sometimes happened since. He who was, in some respects, the highest in the College of the Apostles became the lowest in the ranks of the children of perdition.

2, 23. And truly the Son of Man goes, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed! And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. Let us also pass that question round among ourselves

*When any turn from Zions way,   
(Alas, what numbers do)!   
Methinks I hear my Savior say,   
Will you forsake Me, too?   
Ah, Lord, with such a heart as mine,   
Unless You hold me fast,   
I feel I must, I shall decline,   
And prove like them at last.   
The help of men and angels joined   
Could never reach my case   
Nor can I hope relief to find   
But in Your boundless Grace.   
What anguish has that question stirred, If I will also go?   
Yet, Lord, relying on Your Word,   
I humbly answer, No.*

God grant us more Grace, that we may be held fast by the records of love!   
24. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. Let me read you these two verses together. They strike me as being very remarkable. Here are two questionsThey began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing, that is, betray their Lord. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. What poor creatures we are! How we are tossed with contrary winds! The new question comes up and yet the old question, which ought to have been smothered by it, still remains there! It is possible that Luke is here alluding to some dispute which the Apostles had previously had and now the Lord, remembering that even in the ashes of contention lived the fires of ambition, would quench the last sparks of the evil fire.

25. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. The people are compelled to use sweet terms to express a very bitter bondage, so they call their tyrants, benefactors.   
26, 27. But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve. For which is greater, he that sits at meat, or he that serves? The guest, or the waiter at the table?   
27-31. Is not he that sits at meat? But I am among you as He that serves. You are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto Me; that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. As our Lord Jesus looked upon His eleven Apostles, He felt that their time of greatest trial was fast approaching. Beyond anything they had ever endured before, they were now to be put into the devils sieve and Satan would toss them to and fro, and seek, if possible, to destroy them!   
32. But I have prayed for you, that your faith fails not.I have made you, Simon, a special object of My prayer. All the brotherhood will be tried, but for you I have especially prayed, for you, who seem to be the strongest, are the weakest of them all, so I have prayed specially for you, that your faith fails not.   
32. And when you are convertedWhen you are restored   
32-39. Strengthen your brethren. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I tell you, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that you shall thrice deny that you know Me. And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked you anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that has a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip, and he that has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough. And He came out, and went, as He was accustomed, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him.

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THE PREPARATORY PRAYERS OF CHRIST   
NO. 3178

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30TH, 1909,

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 7, 1873.

**Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus, also being baptized, and praying, the Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, You are My Beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.   
Luke 3:21, 22.**

**And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him, His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles.   
Luke 6:12,13.**

**And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His Countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.   
Luke 9:28, 29.**

**And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.   
Matthew 14:23-25.**

**Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead were laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always: but because of the people here, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me.**

**John 11:41, 42.**

**And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren. Luke 22:31, 32.**

**And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. Luke 23:46.**

THERE is one peculiarity about the life of our Lord Jesus Christ which everybody must have noticed who has carefully read the four Gospels, namely, that He was a Man of much prayer. He was mighty as a Preacher, for even the officers who were sent to arrest Him said, Never man spoke like this Man. But He appears to have been even mightier in prayer, if such a thing could be possible! We do not read that His disciples ever asked Him to teach them to preach, but we are told that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray. He had no doubt been praying with such amazing fervor that His disciples realized that He was a master of the holy art of prayer and they, therefore, desired to learn the secret for themselves. The whole life of our Lord Jesus Christ was one of prayer. Though we are often told about His praying, we feel that we scarcely need to be informed of it, for we know that He must have been a Man of prayer. His acts are the acts of a prayerful Man. His words speak to us like the words of One whose heart was constantly lifted up in prayer to His Father. You could not imagine that He would have breathed out such blessings upon men if He had not first breathed in the atmosphere of Heaven! He must have been much in prayer or He could not have been so abundant in service and so gracious in sympathy.

Prayer seems to be like a silver thread running through the whole of our Saviors life and we have the record of His prayers on many special occasions. It struck me that it would be both interesting and instructive for us to notice some of the seasons which Jesus spent in prayer. I have selected a few which occurred either before some great work or some great suffering, so our subject will really be the preparatory prayers of Christthe prayers of Christ as He was approaching something which would put a peculiar stress and strain upon His Manhood, either for service or for suffering. And if the consideration of this subject shall lead all of us to learn the practical lesson of praying at all timesand yet to have special seasons for prayer just before any peculiar trial or unusual servicewe shall not have met in vain!

I. The first prayer we are to consider is OUR LORDS PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR HIS BAPTISM. It is in Luke 3:21, 22Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus, also being baptized, and praying, (it seems to have been a continuous act in which He had been previously occupied), the Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, You are My Beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.

The Baptism of our Lord was the commencement of His manifestation to the sons of men. He was now about to take upon Himself in full all the works of His Messiahship and, consequently, we find Him very specially engaged in prayer. And, Beloved, it seems to me to be peculiarly appropriate that when any of us have been converted and are about to make a Scriptural profession of our faithabout to take up the soldiers life under the great Captain of our salvationabout to start out as pilgrims to Zions cityI say that it seems to me to be peculiarly appropriate for us to spend much time in very special prayer! I would be very sorry to think that anyone would venture to come to be baptized, or to be united with a Christian Church without having made that action a matter of much solemn consideration and earnest prayer. But when the decisive step is about to be taken, our whole being should be very specially concentrated upon our supplication at the Throne of Grace.

Of course we do not believe in any sacramental efficacy attaching to the observance of the ordinance, but we receive a special blessing in the act, itself, because we are moved to pray even more than usual before it takes place and at the time. At all events, I know that it was so in my own case. It was many years ago, but the remembrance of it is very vivid at this moment and it seems to me as though it only happened yesterday! It was in the month of May and I rose very early in the morning so that I might have a long time in private prayer. Then I had to walk about eight miles, from Newmarket to Isleham, where I was to be baptized in the river. I think that the blessing I received that day resulted largely from that season of solitary supplication and my meditation, as I walked along the country roads and lanes, upon my indebtedness to my Savior and my desire to live to His praise and Glory. Dear young people, take care that you start right in your Christian life by being much in prayer! A profession of faith that does not begin with prayer will end in disgrace. If you come to join the Church, but do not pray to God to uphold you in consistency of life, and to make your profession sincere, the probability is that you are already a hypocrite! Or if that is too uncharitable a suggestion, the probability is that if you are converted, the work has been of a very superficial character and not of that deep and earnest kind of which prayer would be the certain index. So again I say to you that if any of you are thinking of making a profession of your faith in Christ, be sure, then, in preparation for it, you devote a special season to drawing near to God in prayer.

As I read the first text, no doubt you noticed that it was while Christ was praying that, the Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, You are My Beloved Son, in You I am well pleased. There are three occasions of which we read in Scripture when God bore audible testimony to Christ. And on each of these three occasions He was either in the act of prayer or He had been praying but a very short time before. Christs prayer is especially mentioned in each instance side by side with the witness of His Fatherand if you, beloved Friends, want to have the witness of God either at your Baptism or on any subsequent act of your lifeyou must obtain it by prayer! The Holy Spirit never sets His seal to a prayerless religion! It has not in it that of which He can approve. It must be truly said of a man, Behold, he prays, before the Lord bears such testimony concerning him as He bore concerning Saul of Tarsus, He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles.

So we find that it was while Christ was praying at His Baptism that the Holy Spirit came upon Him, in a bodily shape like a dove, to qualify Him for His public service! And it is through prayer that we, also, receive that spiritual enrichment that equips us as co-workers together with God. Without prayer you will remain in a region that is desolate as a desert! But bend your knees in supplication to the Most High and you have reached the land of promise, the country of benediction! Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you, not merely as to His gracious Presence, but as to the powerful and efficacious working of the Holy Spirit! More prayermore power! The more pleading with God that there is, the more power will there be in pleading with men, for the Holy Spirit will come upon us while we are pleading and so we shall be fitted and qualified to do the work to which we are called of God!

Let us learn, then, from this first instance of our Saviors preparatory prayer at His Baptism, the necessity of special supplication on our part in similar circumstances. If we are making our first public profession of faith in Him, or if we are renewing that profession. If we are moving to another sphere of service, if we are taking office in the Church as deacons or elders, if we are commencing the work of the pastorate. If we are in any way coming out more distinctly before the world as the servants of Christ, let us set apart special seasons for prayerand so seek a double portion of the Holy Spirits blessing to rest upon us!

II. The second instance of the preparatory prayers of Christ which we are to consider is OUR LORDS PRAYER PREPARATORY TO CHOOSING HIS TWELVE APOSTLES. It is recorded in Luke 6:12, 13And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. [See Sermon #798, Volume 14SPECIAL PRO

TRACTED PRAYERRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at   
http://www.spurgeongems.org.] And when it was day, He called unto Him, His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles.

Our Lord was about to extend His ministry. His one tongue, His one voice might have delivered His personal message throughout Palestine, but He was desirous of having far more done than He could individually accomplish in the brief period of His public ministry upon earth. He would therefore have 12 Apostles and afterwards 70 disciples who would go forth in His name and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. He was infinitely wiser than the wisest of mere men, so why did He not at once select His 12 Apostles? The men had been with Him from the beginning and He knew their characters and their fitness for the work He was about to entrust to them, so He might have said to Himself, I will have James, John, Peter and the rest of the twelve, and send them forth to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and to exercise the miraculous powers with which I will endow them. He might have done this if He had not been the Christ of Godbut being the Anointed of the Father, He would not take such an important step as that without long continued prayer. So He went alone to His Father, told Him all that He desired to do and pleaded with Him, not in the brief fashion that we call prayer which usually lasts only a few minutesbut His pleading lasted through an entire night!

What our Lord asked for, or how He prayed, we cannot tell, for it is not revealed to us. But I think we shall not be guilty of vain or unwarranted curiosity if we use our imagination for a minute or two. In doing so, with the utmost reverence, I think I hear Christ crying to His Father whom the right men might be selected as the leaders of the Church of God upon the earth. I think I also hear Him pleading that upon these chosen men a Divine influence might rest, that they might be kept in character, honest in heart and holy in lifeand that they might also be preserved in sound Doctrine and not turn aside to error and falsehood. Then I think I hear Him praying that success might attend their preaching. That they might be guided where to go, where the blessing of God would go with them and that they might find many hearts willing to receive their testimony. And that when their personal ministry should end, they might pass on their commission to others so that as long as there should be a harvest to be reaped for the Lord, there should be laborers to reap itas long as there should be lost sinners in the world, there would also be earnest, consecrated men and women seeking to pluck the brands from the burning. I will not attempt to describe the mighty wrestling of that night of prayer when, in strong cries and tears, Christ poured out His very soul into His Fathers ear and heart! But it is clear that He would not dispatch a solitary messenger with the glad tidings of the Gospel unless He was assured that His Fathers authority and the Spirits power would accompany the servants whom He was about to send forth.

What a lesson there is in all this to us! What Infallible Guidance there is here as to how a missionary society should be conducted! Where there is one committee meeting for business, there ought to be 50 for prayer! Whenever we get a missionary society whose main business it is to pray, we shall have a society whose distinguishing characteristic will be that it is the means of saving a multitude of souls! And to you, my dear young Brothers in the College, I feel moved to say that I believe we shall have a far larger blessing than we have already had when the spirit of prayer in the College is greater than it now is, though I rejoice to know that it is very deep and fervent even now! You, Brothers, have never been lacking in prayerfulness. I thank God that I have never had occasion to complain or to grieve on that account, but still, who knows what blessing might follow a night of prayer at the beginning or at any part of the sessionor an all-night wrestling in prayer in the privacy of your own bedrooms? Then, when you go out to preach the Gospel on the Sabbath, you will find that the best preparation for preaching is much praying! I have always found that the meaning of a text can be better learned by prayer than in any other way. Of course we must consult lexicons and commentaries to see the literal meaning of the words and their relation to one anotherbut when we have done all that, we shall still find that our greatest help will come from prayer! Oh, that every Christian enterprise were commenced with prayer, continued with prayer and crowned with prayer! Then might we, also, expect to see it crowned with Gods blessing!

So once again I remind you that our Saviors example teaches us that for seasons of special service, we need not only prayers of a brief character, excellent as they are for ordinary occasions, but special protracted wrestling with God like that of Jacob at the Brook Jabbok, so that each one of us can say to the Lord, with holy determination

*With You all night I mean to stay,*

*And wrestle till the break of day.*   
When such sacred persistence in prayer as this becomes common throughout the whole Church of Christ, Satans long usurpation will be coming to an end and we shall be able to say to our Lord, as the 70 disciples did when they returned to Him with joy, Even the devils are subject unto us through Your name!

III. Now, thirdly, let us consider OUR LORDS PRAYER PREPARATORY TO HIS TRANSFIGURATION. You will find it in Luke 9:28, 29And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His Countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. You see that it was as He prayed that He was transfigured.

Now, Beloved, do you really desire to reach the highest possible attainments of the Christian life? Do you, in your inmost soul, pine and pant after the choicest joys that can be known by human beings this side of Heaven? Do you aspire to rise to full fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to be transformed into His image from glory to glory? If so, the way is open to you! It is the way of prayeronly there will you find these priceless blessings! If you fail in prayer, you will assuredly never come to Tabors top! There is no hope, dear Friends, of our ever attaining to anything like a transfiguration and being covered with the Light of God so that whether in the body or out of the body we cannot tell, unless we are much in prayer!

I believe that we make more real advance in the Divine Life in an hour of prayer than we do in a month of hearing sermons. I do not mean that we are to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but I am sure that without the praying, the hearing is of little worth! We must pray. We must plead with God if we are to really grow spiritually. In prayer, very much of our spiritual digestion is done. When we are hearing the Word, we are very much like the cattle when they are cropping the grassbut when we follow our hearing with meditation and prayer, we do, as it were, lie down in the green pasturesand get the rich nutriment for our souls out of the Truth of God. My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, would you shake off the earthliness that still clings to you? Would you get rid of your doubts and your fears? Would you overcome your worldliness? Would you master all your besetting sins? Would you glow and glisten in the brightness and Glory of the holiness of God? Then be much in prayer, as Jesus was! I am sure that it must be so and that, apart from prayer, you will make no advance in the Divine Lifebut that in waiting upon God, you shall renew your spiritual strength, you shall mount up with wings as eagles, you shall run and not be wearyyou shall walk and not faint!

IV. I must hasten on lest time should fail us before I have finished. And I must put together two of OUR LORDS PRAYERS PREPARATORY TO GREAT MIRACLES.

The first, which preceded His stilling of the tempest on the Lake of Gennesaret, is recorded in Matthew 14:23-25And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. He had been pleading with His Father for His disciples and then, when their ship was tossed by the waves, and driven back by the contrary winds, He came down to them from the lofty place where He had been praying for them, making a pathway for Himself across the turbulent waters that He was about to calm. Before He walked upon those tossing billows, He had prayed to His Father. Before He stilled the storm, He had prevailed with God in prayer.

Am I to do any great work for God? Then I must first be mighty upon my knees! Is there a man here who is to be the means of covering the sky with clouds and bringing the rain of Gods blessing on the dry and barren Church which so sorely needs reviving and refreshing? Then he must be prepared for that great work as Elijah was when, on the top of Carmel, He cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees, and prayed as only he could pray! We shall never see a little cloud like a mans hand, which shall afterwards cover all the sky with blackness, unless first of all we know how to cry mightily unto the Most High! But when we have done that, then shall we see what we desire. Moses would never have been able to control the children of Israel as he did if he had not first been in communion with his God in the desert, and afterwards in the mountain. So if we are to be men of power, we also must be men of prayer!

The other instance to which I want to refer, showing how our Lord prayed before working a mighty miracle, is when He stood by the grave of Lazarus. You will find the account of it in John 11:41, 42Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always: but because of the people here, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me. He did not cry, Lazarus, come forth, so that the people heard it, and Lazarus heard it, until first He had prayed, My Father, grant that Lazarus may rise from the dead, and had received the assurance that he would do so as soon as he was called by Christ to come forth from the grave.

But, Brothers and Sisters, do you not see that if Christ, who was so strong, needed to pray thus, what need there is for us, who are so weak, to also pray? If He, who was God as well as Man, prayed to His Father before He worked a miracle, how necessary it is for us, who are merely men, to go to the Throne of Grace and plead there with importunate fervency if we are ever to do anything for God! I fear that many of us have been feeble out here in public because we have been feeble out there on the lone mountainside where we ought to have been in fellowship with God. The way to be fitted to work what men will call wonders, is to go to the God of Wonders and implore Him to gird us with His all-sufficient strength so that we may do exploits to His praise and Glory!

V. The next prayer we are to consider is OUR LORDS PRAYER PREPARATORY TO PETERS FALL. We have the record of that in Luke 22:31, 32And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your breth

ren. [See Sermons #2620, Volume 45CHRISTS PRAYER FOR PETER; #2034, Volume 34 PETERS RESTORATION and #2035, Volume 34PETER AFTER HIS RESTORATIONRead/download all the sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

There is much that is admirable and instructive in this utterance of our Lord. Satan had not then tempted Peter, yet Christ had already pleaded for the Apostle whose peril He clearly foresaw! Some of us would have thought that we were very prompt if we had prayed for a Brother or Sister who had been tempted and who had yielded to the temptation. But our Lord prayed for Peter before he was tempted. As soon as Satan had desired to have him in his sieve, that he might sift him as wheat, our Savior knew the thought that was formed in the diabolic mindand He at once pleaded for His imperiled servant who did not even know the danger that was threatening him! Christ is always beforehand with us. Before the storm comes, He has provided the harbor of refuge. Before the disease attacks us, He has the remedy ready to cure it. His mercy outruns our misery!

What a lesson we ought to learn from this action of Christ! Whenever we see any friend in peril through temptation, let us not begin to talk about him, but let us at once pray for him! Some persons are very fond of hinting and insinuating about what is going to happen to certain people with whom they are acquainted. I pray you, beloved Friends, not to do it! Do not hint that So-and-So is likely to fall, but pray that he may not fall. Do not insinuate anything about him to others, but tell the Lord what your anxiety is concerning him.

But So-and-So has made a lot of money and he is getting very purseproud. Well, even if it is so, do not talk about him to others, but pray God to grant that he may not be allowed to become purse-proud. Do not say that he will be, but pray constantly that he may not beand do not let anyone but the Lord know that you are praying for him.

Then there is So-and-So. He is so elated with the success he has had that one can scarcely get to speak to him. Well then, Brother, pray that he may not be elated. Do not say that you are afraid he is growing proud, for that would imply what you would be if you were in his place! Your fear reveals a secret concerning your own nature, for what you judge that he would be is exactly what you would do in similar circumstances! We always measure other peoples corn with our own bushelwe do not borrow their bushel. And we can judge ourselves by our judgment of others. Let us cease these censures and judgmentsand let us pray for our Brothers and Sisters. If you fear that a minister is somewhat turning aside from the faith, or if you think that his ministry is not so profitable as it used to be, or if you see any other imperfection in him, do not go and talk about it to people in the street, for they cannot set him rightgo and tell his Master about him! Pray for him and ask the Lord to make right whatever is wrong. There is a sermon by old Matthew Wilks about our being Epistles of Christ, written not with ink, and not on tablets of stone, but in fleshy tablets of the heart. And he said that ministers are the pens with which God writes on their hearts heartsand that pens need sharpening every now and thenbut even when they are sharp, they cannot write without ink! So he said that the best service that the people could render to the preacher was to pray the Lord to give them new pens and dip them in the fresh ink that they might write better than before! Do so, dear Friendsdo not blot the page with your censures and unkind remarks, but help the preacher by pleading for him even as Christ prayed for Peter!

VI. Now I must close with our LORDS PREPARATORY PRAYER JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH. You will find it in Luke 23:46And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. [See Sermons #2311,

Volume 39OUR LORDS LAST CRY FROM THE CROSS and #2644, Volume 45THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSSRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

Our Lord Jesus was very specially occupied in prayer as the end of His earthly life drew near. He was about to die as His peoples Surety and Substitute. The wrath of God, which was due to them, fell upon Him! Knowing all that was to befall Him, He set His face steadfastly to go unto Jerusalem and, in due time, He endured the Cross, despising the shame. But He did not go to Gethsemane and Golgotha without prayer! Son of God as He was, He would not undergo that terrible ordeal without much supplication. You know how much there is about His praying in the later chapters of Johns Gospel. There is especially that great prayer of His for His Church in which He pleaded with amazing fervor for those whom His Father had given Him. Then there was His agonized pleading in Gethsemane when His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. We will not say much about that, but we can well imagine that the bloody sweat was the outward and visible expression of the intense agony of His soul which was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.

All that Christ did and suffered was full of prayer, so it was but fitting that His last utterance on earth should be the prayerful surrender of His spirit into the hands of His Father. He had already pleaded for His murderers, Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do. He had promised to grant the request of the penitent thief, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. Now nothing remained for Him to do but to say, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. His life, which had been a life of prayer, was thus closed with prayeran example well worthy of His peoples imitation!

Perhaps I am addressing someone who is conscious that a serious illness is threatening. Well then, dear Friend, prepare for it by prayer! Are you dreading a painful operation? Nothing will help you to bear it so well as pleading with God concerning it! Prayer will help you mentally as well as physicallyyou will face the ordeal with far less fear if you have laid your care before the Lord and committed yourselfbody, soul and spiritinto His hands. If you are expecting, before long, to reach the end of your mortal life either because of your advanced age, or your weak constitution, or the inroads of the deadly consumptionpray much. You need not fear to be baptized in Jordans swelling flood if you are constantly being baptized in prayer! Think of your Savior in the Garden and on the Crossand pray even as He didNot my will, but yours be done...Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.

While I have been speaking to Believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, there may have been some here who are still unconvertedwho have imagined that prayer is the way to Heavenyet it is not! Prayer is a great and precious help on the road, but Christ, alone, is the Way! And the very first step heavenward is to trust ourselves wholly to Him. Faith in Christ is the all-important matter and if you truly believe in Him, you are saved! But the very first thing that a saved man does is to prayand the very last thing that he does before he gets to Heaven is to pray. Well did Montgomery write

**Prayer is the contrite sinners voice, Returning from his ways   
While angels in their songs rejoice, And cry, Behold, he prays!   
Prayer is the Christians vital breath, The Christians native air!   
His watchword at the gates of death He enters Heaven with prayer!**

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: LUKE 18:1-14.**   
Verse 1. And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought   
always to pray, and not to faint. [See Sermon #2519, Volume 43WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] An

old writer says that many of Christs parables need a key to unlock them. Here, the key hangs outside the door, for at the very beginning of the parable we are told what Christ meant to teach by itthat men ought always to pray, and not to faint. And this is the parable.

2. Saying, There was in a city a judge who feared not God, neither regarded man. It is a great pity for any city and for any country where the judges do not fear Godwhere they feel that they have been put into a high office in which they may do just as they please. There were such judges in the olden times even in this landGod grant that we may not see any more like them!

3. And there was a widow in that city and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. She had no friend to plead for her. She had nobody to help her and, therefore, when she was robbed of her little patrimony, she went to the court and asked the judge for justice.

4. And he would not for a while. He preferred to be unjust. As he could do as he liked, he liked to do as he should not.   
4, 5. But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. She seems to have gone to him so often that he grew quite fatigued and pained by her persistence! The Greek words are very expressive, as though she had beaten him in the eyes and so bruised him that he could not endure it any longer. Of course, the poor woman had not done anything of the kindbut the judge thus describes her continual importunity as a wounding of him, as an attacking of him, an assault upon himfor he had, perhaps, a little conscience left. He had, at least, enough honesty to confess that he did not fear God, nor regard man. There are some of whom that is true, who will not admit it, but this judge admitted itand though he was but little troubled about ithe said, that I may not be worried to death by this womans continual coming, I will grant her request and avenge her of her adversary.   
6, 7. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says. And shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him, though He

bears long with them? [See Sermon #2836, Volume 6PRAYERFUL IMPORTUNITY Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He is no

unjust judge! He is One who is perfectly holy, just, true and who appears in a nearer and dearer Character than that of judge, even as the One who chose His people from eternity! Shall not God avenge His own elect? Yes, that He willonly let them persevere in prayer and cry day and night unto Him.

8. I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? [See Sermon #1963, Volume  
33THE SEARCH FOR FAITHRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] If anybody can find it, He can, for He is the Creator of it! Yet, when He comes, there will be so little of it in proportion to what He deserves, and so little in proportion to the loving kindness of the Lord, that it will seem as if even He could not find italthough if there were only as much faith as a grain of mustard seed He would be the first to spy it out!

9. And He spoke this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. It seems as if these two things went togetheras our esteem of ourselves goes up, our esteem of others goes downthe scales seem to work that way.

10. Two men went up into the Temple to pray. [See Sermon #2395, Volume 41  
THE BLESSINGS OF PUBLIC WORSHIPRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It was the place that was specially dedicated for prayer. It was the place where God had promised to meet with suppliants. They did well, in those days, to go up into the Temple to pray to God. Though, in these days

*Wherever we seek Him, He is found,*

*And every place is hallowed ground.*   
It is sheer superstition which imagines that one place is better for prayer than another! So long as we can be quiet and still, let us pray wherever we may be.

10, 11. The one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not as other men areextortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. It is possible that this was all true. We have no indication that he was a hypocriteand if what he said was truethere was something in it for which he might well thank God. It was a great mercy not to be an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adultererbut what spoilt his expression of thankfulness was that back-handed blow at the other man who was praying in the same Templeor even as this publican. What had the Pharisee to do with him? He had quite enough to occupy his thoughts if he could only see himself as he really was in Gods sight!

12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Observe that there is no prayer in all that the Pharisee said. There was a great deal of self-righteousness and self-congratulation, but nothing else. There was certainly no prayer at all in it!

13. And the publican, standing afar offJust on the edge of the crowd, keeping as far away as he could from the Most Holy Place  
13. Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. [See Sermon #1949, Volume

33A SERMON FOR THE WORST MAN ON EARTHRead/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That was all prayerit was a prayer for mercy, it was a prayer in which the suppliant took his right place, for he was, as he said, a sinner. He does not describe himself as a penitent sinner, or as a praying sinner, but simply as a sinner. And as a sinner, he goes to God asking for mercy. Our English version does not give the full meaning of the publicans prayer, it is, God be propitious to me, that is, be gracious to me through the ordained Sacrifice. And that is one of the points of the prayer that made it so acceptable to God. There is a mention of the Atonement in it. There is a pleading of the sacrificial blood. It was a real prayer and an acceptable prayerwhile the Pharisees boasting was not a prayer at all.

14. I tell you, this manThis publican, sinner as he had been, though he had no broad phylacteries like the Pharisee had, though he may not have washed his hands before he came into the Temple, as, no doubt the Pharisee didthis man, who could not congratulate himself upon his own excellence, this man

14. Went down to his house justified rather than the other. He obtained both justification and the peace of mind that comes from it! God smiled upon him and set him at ease concerning his sin. The other man received no justificationhe had not sought it and he did not get it. He had a kind of spurious ease of mind when he went into the Temple and he probably carried it away with him! But he certainly was not justified in

the sight of God. [See Sermon #2687, Volume 46TOO GOOD TO BE SAVED!Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

14. For everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. God turns things upside down! If we think much of ourselves, He makes us little, and if we make little of ourselves, we shall find that a humble and contrite heart He will not despise! May He teach us so to pray that we may go down to our house justified, as the publican was!

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PETER AFTER HIS RESTORATION   
NO. 2035

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, July 22, 1888 BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

**When you are converted, strengthen your Brethren. Luke 22:32.**

PETER was to be sifted, so our Lord warned him. And Satan was to operate with the sieve. Satan had an intense desire to destroy Peterindeed, he would like to destroy all the chosen of Godand therefore he desired to sift him as wheat, in the hope that he would be blown away with the husks and the chaff. To see a child of God perish would bring to the Evil One a malicious joy, for he would have wounded the heart of God. If ever the fallen spirit can be happy, he would derive happiness from defeating the Grace of God and robbing the Lord Jesus of those whom He bought with His blood.

Satan has desired to have youit would be a satisfaction to him to have a Believer in his power. He was anxious to get Peter into his clutches, to give him as tremendous a shaking as he could manage. If Satan knows, as he no doubt does, concerning any one Believer that he cannot quite destroy him, then he is especially anxious to worry him. If he cannot devour the chosen, he would at least defile themif he cannot ruin their souls, he would break their quiet. As the Revised Version puts it, Satan even asks God to have them that he may sift them as wheat. This is a curious statement, for it seems from it that the devil can pray. And that his petition may be granted him.

The margin has it, Satan has obtained you by asking. The Lord may grant the request of the devil, himself, and yet he would not prove thereby that he had any love towards him. The Lords wisdom may grant Satans desire and in the very act overthrow his evil power. Let us not, then, stake our faith in the Lords love upon His giving us the precise answer we desire, for what He gives to Satan He may see fit to deny to those whom He loves and He may do so because He loves them. It is a fact that the Evil One is permitted to test the precious metal of Gods treasury.

The story in the Book of Job is no fiction or piece of imagination. It is even so that Satan desires to have choice ones of God put into his power that he may test themthat he may torment them, that he may, if possible, destroy them. The Lord may permit this as He did in the case of Job and as He did in the case of the Apostles and especially in the case of Peter. He may grant the Tempters request and allow him to touch our bone and our flesh and see whether we will hold to our God in mortal agony.

We are not bound to know Gods reasons for what He does or permits.

It is sometimes sinful to enquire into those reasons. What the Lord does is right. Let that be enough for us who are His children. But we can see, sometimes, a reason why the saints should be sifted as wheat. For it appertains unto wheat to be sifted, because it is wheat. Sifting brings a desirable result with itit is for the saints good that they should be tried. Satan doubtless wishes that God may let the good seed fall to the ground and be destroyed. But He overrules it to separate the chaff from the wheat, and to make the wheat into clean grain, fit for storage in the Kings granary.

Satan has often done us a good turn when he has meant to do us a bad one. After all, he is only a dishwasher in Gods kitchen to clean His vessels. And some of them have received special scouring by means of his harsh temptations. God also may find a reason for allowing His saints to be tempted of Satan and that reason may have more relation to others than to themselves. They may have to be tested for other peoples good. The testing of their faith is more precious than that of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, and part of its preciousness is its usefulness.

The child of God under temptation, behaving himself grandly, will become a standing example to those who are around him. You have heard of the patience of Job. But you never would have heard of the patience of Job if Satan had not sifted him. This great treasury of instruction, the Book of Job, and all the Truth of God taught us by Jobs example comes to us through Gods having permitted Satan to put forth his hand and to press the Patriarch so sorely. We also may be afflictednot so much for ourselvesas for others. And this may be remarkably the case in the instances of those of you whom God makes useful to a large circle of friends.

You live for others and therefore suffer for others. The whole of your lives will not be accounted for by yourselves but by your surroundings. As a minister I may have to be tempted because temptation is one of the best books in a ministers library. As a parent you may need affliction, because a father without a trial can give no counsel to a tempted child. Public workers may have to be tried in ways which, to a private Christian, are unnecessary. Let us accept remarkable discipline if thereby we are qualified for remarkable service. If by the roughness of our own road we are trained to conduct the Lords sheep along their difficult pathway to the pastures on the hilltops of Glory, let us rejoice in every difficulty of the way. If Apostles and men like Peter had to be put into Satans sieve while they were being trained for their lifework, we may not hope to escape.

Observe, dear Friends, what came before the sifting and went with the sifting. Note well that blessed but. But I have prayed for you. Not, Your Brethren have prayed for you. Not, You have prayed for yourself. But, I have prayed for you. Jesus, that master in the art of prayer, that mighty Pleader who is our Advocate above, assures us that He has already prayed for us. I have prayed for you, meansbefore the temptation I have prayed for you. I foresaw all the danger in which you would be placed and concerning that danger I have exercised My function as High Priest and Intercessor.

I have prayed for you. What a Divine comfort is this to any who are passing through deep waters! You only go where Jesus has gone before you with His intercession. Jesus has made provision for all your future in a prayer already presentedI have prayed for you. You may be much comforted by the prayers of a minister, or of some Christian man who has power with God. But what are all such intercessions compared with the praying of your Lord? It were well to have Noah, Samuel and Moses praying for usbut far better to have Jesus say, I have prayed for you. Blessed be God, Satan may have his sieve but as long as Jesus wears His breastplate we shall not be destroyed by Satans tossing.

Notice that the principal object of the prayer of our Lord was, that your faith fail not. He knows where the vital point lies and there He holds the shield. As long as the Christians faith is safe, the Christians self is safe. I may compare faith to the head of the warrior. O Lord, you have covered my head in the day of battle, for You have prayed for me that my faith fail not. I may compare faith to the heart and the Lord holds His shield over the heart that we may not be injured where a wound would be fatal. I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.

Faith is the standard-bearer in every spiritual conflict. And if the standard-bearer fall, then it is an evil daytherefore our Lord prays that the standard-bearer may never fail to hold up His banner in the midst of the frayI have prayed for you, that your faith fail not. If faith fails, everything failscourage fails, patience fails, hope fails, love fails, joy fails. Faith is the root of Divine Grace. And if this is not in order, then the foliage of the soul, which shows itself in the form of other graces, will soon begin to wither. I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.

Learn a lesson from this, my Brethrenthat you take care to commend your faith unto your God. Do not begin to doubt because you are temptedthat is to lay bare your breast. Do not doubt because you are attackedthat is to loosen your harness. Believe. I had fainted, said David, unless I had believed. It must be one thing or the other with us. Believing, or faintingwhich shall it be? Above all, taking the shield of faith. Not only taking it so that it may cover all but making this the vital point of holy carefulness. Watch in all things, but especially guard your faith. If you are careful about one thing more than another, above all be careful of your faith. I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.

Our Saviors pleading goes to the point and thus it teaches us where to direct our own desires and our own prayers. He asks for us far more wisely than we shall ever learn to ask for ourselveslet us copy His petitions. And therefore it follows because of Christs prayer that, though Peter may be very badly put to it, yet he shall be recovered, for Christ speaks of it as of an assured factWhen you are converted. As much as to sayWhen you come back to your old life and your old faith, then exercise yourself usefully for your Lord. He speaks of Peters restoration as if it were quite sure to be.

And is it not quite sure to be? If Jesus, the Beloved of the Father, prays for His people, shall He not win His suit with God? He will win it! He will uplift Peter from among the siftings where Satan has thrown him. We are

sure He will, for in prospect thereof, He sets him a loving and suitable taskWhen you are converted, strengthen your Brethren. The establishment and confirmation of all the rest are to hinge upon the setting up in his place of poor thrice-denying Peter.

Now, beloved Friends, I may be addressing a number of persons who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as Peter did but they have fallen into a bad state and need a new conversion. I am very sorry for you but I am by no means staggered at the sight of you, for you belong to a numerous class. When sitting to see enquirers I am constantly stumbling on backsliders, who come back very sincerely and very truly and feel right pleased to find a Christian home again. I meet with many who have been outside in the worldsome of them for yearsattending the House of God very irregularly and seldom or never enjoying the light of Gods countenance.

They have wandered so that none can tell whether they are the Lords or not, except the Lord Himself and He always knows them that are His. I bear happy witness that the Lord brings His own back again. Though the Lords sheep stray, yet the Good Shepherd finds them. Though the Lords children go into the far countrythey each one in due time say, I will arise and go to my Father. It is not every prodigal that returns but only the prodigal son. In due time, the son returns to the Fathers house. It is not every bit of stuff that falls on the ground that is found again. But the womans piece of money is sure to be discovered. She will not lose itit is hers and she values it. She sweeps the house and makes any quantity of dust until she finds it. The Lord will find His own, even though Satan tries to prevent the gracious discovery.

It may be some of you have wandered into error. May you be brought back very speedily. And if you are, we are going to say to you tonight, Strengthen your Brethren. Possibly there has been a general decay in Divine Grace within your soul. You have lost your joy, your peace, your love, your zeal. This is sadmay the Lord restore you in answer to the prayer of Him that redeemed you. And then, when you are converted, seek to recover your Brethren from the decay of their graces which has also injured them. You will not be converted in quite the same sense as you were at first but yet you will be turned again to your old life and hope and then you are to strengthen your Brethren by aiming at their restoration to their first love and earliest zeal.

Perhaps you have been neglectful. I find that many who were good Christian people in the country, always at the House of Prayer and walking near to God, will come up to this wicked London to live and the change is a serious injury to them. They get lost to Christian society and by degrees they become deteriorated by the ungodliness of this modern Sodom. Nobody in the street wherein they live ever goes to a place of worship and they do not know anybody at the Chapel, or at the Church. And so they give up going to public worship and fall into the ways and habits of the ungodly world. They are not happy. Gods children never are happy when they leave their Father.

If you have ever eaten the white bread of Heaven, you will never rest content with the black ashes of earth. If the flavor of Christs love has once been in your mouth, you are spoiled for a worldling. You will not make an expert sinner now, for your hand is out of it. Once converted, you must be a child of God, or nothing. You are ruined for this world. And if the world to come is not yours, where are you? The devil himself will not like you longyou are not of his sort. There is something about you that will not suit Satan any more than Jonah suited the whale. The whale was quite as glad to part with Jonah as Jonah was to be set free from the whale.

I see arrangements for your coming home again. The Lord devises means that His banished shall not perishthose tokens of disquiet, those starts in your sleep, those horrible forebodings, that inward hunger are all pulling at you to come home. You have been trying to feed upon the dust which is ordained to be the serpents meat and if the Lord had not loved you, you would have done so. A deceived heart has turned you aside but in love to your soul the Lord has made you aware of it and your cry is, I will go and return to my first husband. For then was it better with me than now.

These are tokens by which I am assured that the Lord will bring His own back. I rest confident that He will turn them and they shall be turned. And I am going to talk to backsliders about what they are to do when they do come back again. We are going to take it for granted that they will come back and to speak to them now about what it is their privilege to attempt under such gracious circumstances. When you are converted, strengthen your Brethren. First, it is the restored mans duty. Secondly, he has a special qualification for it. And thirdly, it will be a great blessing to him to set about it.

I. First it is HIS DUTY. He has gone astray and he has been brought backwhat better can he do than to strengthen his Brethren?   
He will thus help to undo the evil which he has worked. Peter must have staggered his Brethren. Some of them must have been quite frightened at him. John soon looked after him but then they were not all Johns. Full of love, John soon hunted up Peter. But the others must have felt that he was a mere reed shaken by the wind. It must have staggered the faith of the weaker sort to see that Peter, who had been such a leader among them, was among the first to deny his Lord. Therefore, Peter, you must build what you have thrown down and bind up what you have torn!   
Go and talk to these people again and tell them how foolish and weak you were. Warn them not to imitate your example. You must henceforth be more bold than anybody else that you may in some measure undo the mischief which you have done. Now, think of this, any of you who have been cold towards the Lord. You have wasted months and even years, in backsliding. Try to recover lost ground. It will be almost impossible for you to do it but do at least make a serious attempt. If anybody has been staggered by your backsliding, look after him and try to bring him back and strengthen him.   
Ask his pardon and beg him to recover the strength of which you helped to rob him. This is the least that you can do. If almighty love has drawn you back again after sad wanderings, lay yourself out with all your heart to do good to those who may have been harmed by your sad turnings aside. Am I asking more of you than simple justice demands? Besides, how can you better express your gratitude to God than by seeking to strengthen your weak Brethren when you have been strengthened yourself?   
After our first conversion, you and I were found seeking earnestly after sinners like ourselves. We had been newly brought out of the house of bondage and we longed to lead other slaves into the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free. This, I say, we ought to do when first brought to Jesus feet. But if, to our disgrace, we have turned aside and have backsliddenand if, to Gods infinite glory, He has restored our souls, and made us strong againthen we ought to renew our zeal for the salvation of others and we ought to have a special eye to backsliders like ourselves. We should say, Lord, I will show how much I thank You for restoring me, by endeavoring to find any that have been overtaken in a fault, that I may restore such in the spirit of meekness, remembering myself also, since I have been tempted and have not stood against the temptation.   
Those of you whom the Good Shepherd has restored should have a quick eye for all the sickly ones of the flock and watch over these with a sympathetic care. You should say, This is the field which I shall try to cultivate. Because in my spiritual sickness the Lord has been pleased to deal so graciously with me, I will, therefore, lay myself out to cherish others who are diseased in soul.   
Do you not think, too, that this becomes our duty, because, doubtless, it is a part of the Divine design? Never let us make a mistake by imagining that Gods Grace is given to a man simply with an eye to himself. Grace neither begins with man nor ends with him with an object confined to the mans own self. When God chose His ancient people Israel, it was not merely that Israel might enjoy the light but that Israel might preserve the light for the rest of the nations. When God saved you He did not save you for your own sake but for His own Names sake, that He might through you show forth His mercy to others.   
We are windows through which the light of heavenly knowledge is to shine upon multitudes of eyes. The light is not for the windows themselves but for those to whom it comes through the windows. Have you ever thought enough about this? When the Lord brings any of you back from your backsliding, it is decidedly with this view that you may be qualified to sympathize with others and wisely guide them back to the fold. All your history, if you read it aright, has a bearing upon your usefulness to your fellow men. If you have been permitted, in an hour of weakness to grow cold, or turn asideand if the Lord, in unspeakable compassion, has restored you to His wayssurely this must be His motivethat you may afterwards strengthen your Brethren.   
By the way, the very wording of the text seems to suggest the dutywe are to strengthen our Brethren. We must do so in order that we may manifest brotherly love and thus prove our sonship towards God. Oh, what a blessed thing it is when we come back to God and feel that we are still in the family! That was the point which we debated with ourselves we feared that we were not the Lords. Whatever some may say about that hymn  
*It is a point I long to know,   
Often it causes anxious thought.*   
I do not give much for the man who has not sometimes had to sing it in the minor key. It is a pity that he ever should have to sing it. He will not if he walks before the Lord with care and watchfulness. But when he has been a naughty child, when his life has not been what it should be, if he does not doubt himself we must take leave to doubt for him. How can he help asking  
*Do I love the Lord or not?   
Am I His or am I not?*   
I am inclined to say with a good experimental writer  
*He that never doubted of his state,   
He mayperhaps he may too late.*   
It is not an ill thing to try yourselves and see whether your faith is gold or dross. To have a question about your position in the heavenly family is a very painful thing and should not be endured one moment if it is in our power to solve the doubt. But if the Lord has brought you back as His child, you now know that you belong to the family and it will be suggested at once to you to do something for the Brethren. Naturally, you will look around to see whether there is any child of God to whom you can show favor for his Fathers sake. You have injured all by your backsliding. And hence it is your duty, when restored to the family, to benefit them all by special consecration and double earnestness.   
Let it be your delight, as well as your duty, to strengthen your Brethren. Prove that you are a Brother by acting a Brothers part. And claim your privilege as a child and exercise it as a child shouldby helping another child that is in need. I think that the text within itself contains this argument.   
Let us see to it, dear Friends, if we have been restored, that we try to look after our weak Brethren, that we may show forth a zeal for the honor and glory of our Lord. When we went astray we dishonored Christ. If any of these others go astray they will do the same. Therefore let us be watchful that if we can, we may prevent their being as foolish as we have been. Let us learn tenderness from our own experience and feel a deep concern for our Brethren. If one member of this Church sins we all sufferin our reputation, at any rate. And, especially, the best known among us have to bear a great deal because of the inconsistency of this person and of that.   
Do you want us to be wounded through you? My Beloved friends, I do not think that one of you would wish to cast reproach upon your minister. Alas, Christ Himself suffers. His worst wounds are those which He receives in the house of His friends. Peter, if you ever denied your Master, mind you look well to others who are growing presumptuous as you were before your great sin. If you meet anyone who is beginning to say, I will go with you to prison and to death, give him a gentle jog and say, Mind you, Brother, you are going near a nasty hole into which I once fell. I pray you take warning from me.

If you speak experimentally, you will have no cause to boast but you will find in your own sin a reason why you should tenderly guard your Brethren lest they should cause like dishonor to that dear Name which is more precious, I hope, to you than life itself. When you are converted, strengthen your Brethren. It is your duty.  
II. Now secondly, HE HAS A QUALIFICATION FOR IT. This Peter is the man who, when he is brought back again, can strengthen his Brethren. He can strengthen them by telling them of the bitterness of denying his Master. He went out and wept bitterly. It is one thing to weep. It is another thing to weep bitterly. There are sweet tears, as well as salt tears. But oh, what weeping a sin costs a child of God!   
I recollect a minister speaking very unguardedlyhe said that the child of God lost nothing by sin except his comfort. And I thought, Oh dear me! And is that nothing? Is that nothing? It is such a loss of comfort that, if that were all, it would be the most awful thing in the world. The more God loves you and the more you love God, the more expensive will you find it to sin. An ordinary sinner sins cheaplythe child of God sins very dearly. If you are the Kings favorite, you must mind your manners, for He will not take from you what He will take from an enemy.   
The Lord your God is a jealous God, because He is a loving God. He has such love for His own chosen that if they turn aside, His jealousy burns like coals of juniper. May God keep us from ever provoking His sacred jealousy by wandering at any time into any kind of sin. Now Peter, because he could tell of the bitterness of backsliding, was the man to go and speak to anyone who was about to backslide and say, Do not do so, my Brother. For it will cost you dearly. Again, Peter was the man to tell another of the weakness of the flesh, for he could say to him, Do not trust yourself. Do not talk about never going aside. Remember how I talked about it? I used to be very lofty in my talk and in my feelings but I had to be brought down.   
I felt so sure that I loved my Lord and Master, that I put great confidence in myself and could not think that I should ever wander from Him. But see, see how I fell? I denied Him thrice before the time called cockcrowing. Thus, you see, Peter was wonderfully qualified by having known the bitterness of sin and by feeling the weakness of his own flesh, to go and strengthen others in these important points. But he was also qualified to bear his personal witness to the power of his Lords prayer. He could never forget that Jesus had said to him, I have prayed for you.   
Peter could say to any Brother who had grown cold or presumptuous, the Lord Jesus prayed for me and it was because of His prayer that I was preserved from going farther, so that I was led back and delivered from the sieve of the Evil One. Do you not think that this would strengthen any trembling one when Peter mentioned it? It is wonderful how men and women are helped by those who have had a similar experience to themselves. Theory is all very well but to speak experimentally has a singular power about it. How one can comfort the bereaved if one has been bereaved himself!   
But how little can the young and inexperienced provide consolation to those who are greatly tried, even though they are anxious to do so! And so, Brethren, if the Lord has blessed you and remembered you in His great mercy and you know the power of the prayer of the great Intercessor, you can strengthen your Brethren by reminding them of the perseverance of the Saviors love.   
And could not Peter speak about the love of Jesus to poor wanderers? The Lord turned and looked upon Peter and that look broke Peters heart and afterwards the Lord spoke to Peter by the sea and said to him, Feed My sheep and feed My lambs. O Beloved, Peter would always remember that, and he would speak of it to any whom he found in a sad and weary condition. He would say, My Lord was very good to me and was willing to receive me back. No, He did not wait until I came back but He came after me. He sent after me, saying, Go tell My disciples and Peter. And when He saw that I was penitent, He never rebuked me, except in such a gentle way that I was rather comforted than rebuked by what He said.   
Oh, you that have wandered and Christ has restored you, comfort the wanderers when you see their tears! When you hear any word of doubt, or anything like despair from them, tell them that there is no truth in the suggestion of Satan that Christ is unwilling to forgive. Beseech them not to slander that dear heart of love which is infinitely more ready to melt towards the penitent than the penitents heart is to melt towards it. You know it. You know that you can speak not only what you have read in the Bible but what you have felt in your own heart. You are qualified, therefore, to strengthen your Brethren.   
And could not Peter fully describe the joy of restoration? Oh, he would say, do not wander. There is no good in it. Do not go away from Jesus. There is no profit to be found there. Come back to Himthere is such peace, such rest with Him. Never, never go away again. Peter ever afterwards in his Epistlesand we are sure that it must have been the same in his spoken ministrywould testify to the love and goodness of Christ and urge the saints to steadfastness in the faith. I would appeal to any child of God here whether he ever gained anything by going away from Christ. No, Brothers and Sisters, the old Proverb says that honesty is the best policy, but I will turn it to a higher use and say, Holiness is the best policy.   
Communion with Christ is the happiest life. If you gained all the world and did not lose your soul but only lost the light of Christs countenance for a few days, you would have made a poor bargain. There is Heaven in every glance of His eye. There is infinite joy in every word of His mouth when He speaks comfortably to His servants. Go not away from Him. Be like Miltons angel, who lived in the sun. Abide in Christ and let His Words abide in you. Closer, closer, closerthis is the way to spiritual wealth. To follow afar off and live at a distance from Christ, even if it does not make your soul perish, yet it will wither up your joys and make you feel an unhappy man, an unhappy woman. Therefore, all those who have tried it should bear their witness and put their experience into the scale as they thus strengthen their Brethren.   
III. And now, lastly, the restored Believer should strengthen his Brethren, because IT WILL BE SUCH A BENEFIT TO HIMSELF. He will derive great personal benefit from endeavoring to cherish and assist the weak ones in the family of God.   
Brother, do this continually and heartily, for thus you will be made to see your own weakness. You will see it in those whom you succor. As you see how they doubt, or grow cold, or become lukewarm, you will say to yourself, These are men of like passions with myself. I see which way I shall drift unless the Grace of God sustains me. It will lead you to throw out another anchor and get a fresh hold as you see how they yield to the tide. One man is wonderfully like another man, only that other men are better than we are. And when we are trying to strengthen them, we are not to look upon ourselves as superior beings but rather as inferior beings and say, He fell yesterday, I may fall today. And if I do not fall today, I may tomorrow.   
All the weaknesses and follies you see in others, believe that they are in yourself and that will tend to humble you. I think that a true minister is often excited to better work by what he sees of weakness in his people, because he says to himself, Am I feeding this flock well? Perhaps he thinks to himself, If I had properly tended them they would not have shown all these weaknesses. And then he will begin to blame his own ministry and look to his own heart and that is a good thing for us all. We very seldom, I think, blame ourselves too, much and it is a benefit to us to see our own failings in others.   
But what a comfort it must have been to Peter to have such a charge committed to him! How sure he must have felt that Jesus had forgiven him, and restored him to His confidence, when the Lord, having asked him, Do you love Me? said to him, Feed My sheep and feed My lambs. Peter is all right again, or else Christ would not trust lambs to him. Peter must be all right, or else Jesus would not put the sheep under his care. It is a grand proof of our being fully restored to the Divine heart when the Lord entrusts us with work to do for His own dear children.   
If you and I are made the means of strengthening our Brethren, what a comfort it will be to our hearts! I know that it is not the highest form of comfort, for Jesus would say of it, Rejoice not in this but rather rejoice that your names are written in Heaven. But still, to a loving child of God, it is no mean consolation to find that God is using him. I know, for my own part, that when I go to see our friends who are ill and near to die, it is a supreme consolation to see how calm they always are, without any exception. Yes, and how joyful they generally arehow triumphant in the departing hour!   
Then I say to myself, Yes, my Master has owned my ministry. The seals of fresh conversions are very precious but the surest seals are these dying saints who have been nurtured in the Gospel that we have preached. They prove the truth of it, for if they do not flinch when they stand looking into eternity but even rejoice in the prospect of meeting their Lord. Then what we preach is true and our Master has not left us without witnesses. So you see that it is a great benefit to a man to strengthen his Brethren, because it becomes a comfort to his own soul.   
And, Brethren, whenever any of you lay yourselves out to strengthen weak Christians, as I pray you may, you will get benefit from what you do in the holy effort. Suppose you pray with them. Well, then, you will pray a little more than if you only prayed for yourself. And anything that adds to your prayerfulness is a clear gain. I wish that you had the habit of making everybody pray with you that comes to your house, saying to them, Now we have done our little business, let us have a word or two of prayer.

Some, even of Gods people, would look at you as if you were very strange! It will do them good to look at you and learn from you the blessed habit. With regard to those who are strangers to Divine things there will often occur opportunities in which you have put them under an obligation, or they have come to you in trouble to ask advice and then you may boldly say, Do not let us part till we have prayed. We used to have an old member of this Church who used to pray in very extraordinary places. Two women were fighting and he knelt down between them to pray and they gave over fighting directly.   
Before a door when there has been a noise in the house he has begun to pray. He was better than a policeman for his prayer awed the most obstinate. They could not understand itthey thought it a strange thing and they did not care to put themselves into direct opposition to the man of God. There is a wonderful power in prayer to bless ourselves, besides the blessings that it will bring upon others. Pray with the weak ones and you will not be a weak one yourself.   
Well, then, your exampleif you use your example to strengthen the weakif you carefully say to yourself, No, I shall not do that because, though I may do it, I may do injury to some weak one. If you hesitate, if you draw back from your own rights, and say, No, no, no. I am thinking of the weak onesyou will get good from that self-denial. If the poor, trembling, wandering backslider is much upon your mind, you will often be very tender how you act. You will look to see where your foot is going down next time, for fear of treading upon somebody or other. And in that way you will be winning for yourself the great gain of a holy carefulness of walk and conversationno small gain to you.   
And againsuppose that in trying to strengthen these weak ones, you begin to quote Scripture to themquote a promise to themthis will bless you. Some of you do not know which promise to quote. You do not even know where to find it in the Word. But if you are in the habit of studying Scripture with a view to strengthening the weak, you will understand it in the best way, for you will get it in a practical form and shape. You will have the Bible at your fingertips. Moreover, one of these days the text that you looked out for old Mary will suit yourself.   
How often have we paid Paul with that which we meant to give to Peter! We have ourselves fed on the milk we prepared for the babes. Sometimes what we have laid up for another comes in handy for ourselves. We strangely find that we ourselves have been fed while we were feeding others, according to that promise, He that waters shall be watered also himself.   
Now, I have said all this to you that have wandered and come back and I want to say it right home to you. May the Holy Spirit speak to your inmost souls. You know who you are and how far all this applies to you. The Lord bless you.   
But, dear Friends, if you have not wandered, if the Lord has kept you these twenty years close to Him and given you the light of His countenance all that time, then I think that you and I and any of us of that sort, ought to strengthen our Brethren still more. Oh, what we owe to Sovereign Grace! To be kept from wanderingwhat a blessing is that! Let us feel that instead of having a small debt to pay, we have a greater debt to acknowledge. Let us wake up to strengthen our Brethren. I ask this of you, members of the Church, because, in so large a Church as this, unless there is a kind of universal mutual pastorate, what can we do? You that are converted, I beseech you to strengthen your Brethren.   
And then, once moreif all this ought to be done to those who are in the family, what ought we not to do for those outsidefor those that have no Christ and no Savior? If you are converted yourself, seek the salvation of your children, of your own brothers and sisters and of all your household. Try to bring in your neighbors to hear the Word. Get them, if you can, under the sound of the Gospel. Why should we not fill up on Thursday night till the uppermost gallery is full? There are some friends up there tonight, and I am glad to see them. May God bless them.   
I hope that the day will come when every seat will be occupied there, so that when we are preaching the Gospel we may scatter it broadcast and find a field upwards as well as downwards where the seed may fall. Oh for a blessing! May we meet in Heaven to praise the Lord our God. Amen.

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CHRISTS PRAYER FOR PETER   
NO. 2620

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, APRIL 30, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 22, 1882.

**But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not. Luke 22:32.**

SATAN has a deadly hatred towards all good men and they may rest assured that somewhere or other, he will meet them on their way to the Celestial City. John Bunyan, in his immortal allegory, placed him in one particular spot and described him as Apollyon straddling the road and swearing by his infernal den that the pilgrim should go no further, but that then and there he would spill poor Christians soul. But the encounter with Apollyon does not happen in the same place to all pilgrims. I have known some of them assailed by him most fiercely at the outset of their march to Zion. Their first days as Christians have been truly terrible to them by reason of the Satanic attacks they have had to endure, but, afterwards, when the devil has left them, angels have ministered to them and they have had years of peace and joy. You remember that in the case of our Savior, no sooner was He baptized than He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. In like manner, there are those whose fiercest trials from the adversary come at the beginning of their public ministry. Others meet with their greatest conflicts in middle life when, perhaps, they are too apt to think themselves secure against the assaults of Satan and to fancy that their experience and their knowledge will suffice to preserve them against his wiles. I know some, like Martin Luther, in whose voyage of life, the middle passage has been full of storm and tempest, and they have scarcely known what it was to have a moments rest during all that period. Then there have been others, the first part of whose career has been singularly calm. Their life has been like a sea of glassscarcely a ripple has been upon the watersand yet, towards the end, the enemy has made up for it, and he has attacked them most ferociously right up to the last! I have known many instances of eminent saints who have had to die, sword in hand, and enter HeavenI was about to say, with the marks of their stern conflict fresh upon them. At any rate, they have been crowned on the battlefield and have fallen asleep at the close of a tremendous fight.

With the most of us who are really going to HeavenI will not say that it is a rule without any exceptionbut with the most of us, at some time or another, we shall know the extreme value of this prayer, Lead us not into temptation of any kind, but deliver us from the Evil One, who, beyond all others, is especially to be dreaded. There is little to be got out of him, even if we conquer him. He usually leaves some mark of his prowess upon us which we may carry to our graves. It were better to leap over hedge and ditch and to go a thousand miles further on our pilgrim road than ever to have a conflict with him, except for those great purposes of which I shall presently speak for a moment. The fight with Apollyon is a terrible ordealan ordeal, however, which a brave Christian will never think of shirking! No, he rather will rejoice that he has an enemy worthy of his steel, that true Damascus blade with which he is armed. And, in the name of God, he will determine, though he wrestles not with flesh and blood, that he will contend against principalities and powers and with the very leader of them allthat there may be all the more Glory to the great King who makes the weakest of His followers to be so strong that they put the old dragon, himself, to flight!

So, dear Friends, rest assured that Satan hates every good man and woman, and that, some time or other, he is pretty sure to show that hatred in a very cruel and deadly attack upon them.

Further, because of his hatred, Satan earnestly desires to put Believers into his sieve that he may sift them as wheatnot that he wants to get the chaff away from thembut simply that he may agitate them. You see the corn in the sieve, how it goes up and down, to and fro. There is not a single grain of it that is allowed to have a moments restit is all in commotion and confusionand the man who is sifting it takes care to sift first one way and next, another way, and then all sorts of ways. Now, that is just what Satan does with those whom he hates, when he gets the opportunity. He sifts them in all manner of ways and puts their whole being into agitation and turmoil. When he gets a hold of us, it is a shaking and sifting, indeed! He takes care that anything like rest or breathing space shall be denied us.

Satan desires thus to sift the saints in his sieve and, at times, God grants his desire. If you look at the Revised Version, in the margin you learn the true idea of Satan having asked, or rather obtained by asking, the power to sift Peter as wheat. God sometimes gives Satan the permission to sift as wheat those who are undoubtedly His peopleand then Satan tosses them to and fro, indeed. That record in the Book of Job, of Satan appearing before God, is repeated in this story of Peter, for the devil had obtained from God liberty to try and test poor boasting Peter. If Christ had not obtained of God, in answer to His intercession, the promise of the preservation of Peter, then had it gone ill, indeed, with the selfconfident Apostle! God grants to Satan permission to try His people in this way because He knows how He will overrule it to His own Glory and their good. There are certain Graces which are never produced in Christians, to a high degree, except by severe temptation. I noticed, said one, in what a chastened spirit a certain minister preached when he had been the subject of most painful temptation. There is a peculiar tenderness without which one is not qualified to shepherd Christs sheep, or to feed His lambsa tenderness without which one cannot strengthen his brethren, as Peter was afterwards to do, a tenderness which does not usually comeat any rate, to such a man as Peter, except by his being put into the sieve and tossed up and down by Satanic temptation!

Let that stand as the preface of my sermon, for I shall not have so much to say upon that as upon another point.   
First, observe, in our text, the grand point of Satans attack. We can see that from the place where Jesus puts the strongest line of defenseI have prayed for you, that your faith fail not. The point of Satans chief attack on a Believer, then, is his faith. Observe, secondly, the peculiar danger of faithThat your faith fail not. That is the dangernot merely lest it should be slackened and weakened, but lest it should fail. And then observe, thirdly, the Believers grand defenseI have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.   
I. Notice carefully, in the first place, THE GRAND POINT OF SATANS ATTACK.  
When he assails a child of God, his main assault is upon his faith, and I suppose that the reason is, first, because faith is the vital point in the Christian. We are engrafted into Christ by faith and faith is the point of contact between the believing soul and the living Christ. If, therefore, Satan could manage to cut through the graft there, then he would defeat the Saviors work most completely. Faith is the very heart of true godliness, for, the just shall live by faith. Take faith away and you have torn the heart out of the gracious man. Hence, Satan, as far as he can, aims his fiery darts at a Believers faith. If he can only destroy faith, then he has destroyed the very life of the Christian! Without faith it is impossible to please God. Therefore, if the devil could but get our faith away from us, we should cease to be pleasing to God and should cease to be accepted in the Beloved. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, look well to your faith! It is the very head and heart of your being as before God. The Lord grant that it may never fail you!   
I suppose that Satan also attacks faith because it is the chief of all our Divine Graces. Love, under some aspects, is the choicest, but to lead the van in conflict, faith must come first. And there are some things which are ascribed solely and entirely to faith that are never ascribed to love. If any man were to speak of our being justified by love, it would grate upon the ears of the godly! If any were to talk of our being justified by repentance, those of us who know our Bible would be up in arms against such a perversion of the Truth of God! But they may speak as long as they like of our being justified by faith, for that is a quotation from the Scriptures. In the matter of justification, faith stands alone. It lays hold on Christs Sacrifice and His righteousness and, thereby, the soul is justified. Faith, if I may say so, is the leader of the Graces in the day of battle and hence Satan says to his demoniacal archers, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israelshoot at faith, kill it if possible. If faith is slain, where is love, where is hope, where is repentance, where is patience? If, faith is conquered, then it is as when a standard-bearer faints. The victory is virtually won by the arch-enemy if he is able to conquer faith, for faith is the noble chieftain among the Graces of a saint!   
I suppose, again, that Satan makes a dead set upon the faith of the Christian became it is the nourishing Grace. All the other Graces within us derive strength from our faith. If faith is at a low ebb, love is sure to burn very feebly. If faith should begin to fail, then would hope grow dim. Where is courage? It is a poor puny thing when faith is weak. Take any Grace you please, and you shall see that its nourishing depends upon the healthy condition of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! To take faith away, therefore, would be to take the fountain away from the streamit would be to withdraw the sun from its rays if light. If you destroy the source, of course that which comes out of it ceases. Therefore, Beloved, take the utmost possible care of your faith, for I may truly say of it that out of it are the issues of life to all your Graces. Faith is that virtuous woman who clothes the whole household in scarlet and feeds them all with luscious and strengthening food. But if faith is gone, the household soon becomes naked, poor, blind and miserable. Everything in a Christian fails when faith ceases to nourish it!   
Next to this, Satan attacks faith because it is the great preserving Grace. The Apostle says, Above allthat is, over all, covering all taking the shield of faith with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Sometimes, the Eastern soldiers had shields so large that they were like doors, and they covered the man from head to foot. Others of them, who used smaller shields, nevertheless handled them so deftly and moved them so rapidly that it was tantamount to the shield covering the entire person. An arrow is aimed at the forehead, up goes the shield and the sharp point rings on the metal! A javelin is hurled at the heart, but the shield turns it aside. The fierce foe aims a poisonous dart at the leg, but the shield intercepts it. Virtually, the shield is all-surroundingand so it is with your faith. As one has well said, It is armor upon armor, for the helmet protects the head, but the shield protects both helmet and head. The breastplate guards the breast, but the bucker or shield defends the breastplate as well as the breast. Faith is a Divine Grace to protect the other Gracesthere is nothing like it and, therefore, I do not wonder that Satan attacks faith when he sees its prominent position and its important influence in the entire town of Mansoul.  
I cannot help saying, also, that I wonder not that Satan attacks faith because it is the effective or efficient Grace. You know what a wonderful chapter that 11th Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews isit is a triumphal arch erected in honor of what? Of faith! According to that Chapter, faith did everythingit quenched the fire, stopped the mouths of lions, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, received the dead who were raised and so on. Faith is the souls right hand. Faith works by love, but, still, it is faith that works, and you can do nothing acceptably before God unless you do it by that right hand of faith. Hence, Satan cannot stand faithhe hates that most of all. Pharaoh tried to have all the male children thrown into the river because they were the fighting force of Israel. He did not mind having the women to grow up to bear burdensit was the men whom he feared. And, in like manner, the devil says, I must stamp out faith, for that is the secret of strength. He will not trouble himself so much about your other Graceshe will probably attack them when he can, but, first of all he saysDown with faith! That is the manchild that must be destroyed! And he aims his sharpest and deadliest darts at it.   
I believe, also, that faith is attacked by Satan, most of all, because it is most obnoxious to him. He cannot endure faith. How do I know that? Why, because God loves it! And if God loves faith and if Christ crowns faith, I am sure that Satan hates it. What are we told concerning the work of Jesus being hindered by unbelief? He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. Now, I will turn that text around and say of Satan, that he cannot do many mighty works against some men because of their faith! Oh, how he sneaks off when he discovers a right royal faith in a man! He knows when he has met his master and he says, Why should I waste my arrows upon a shield carried by such a man as that? He believes in God, he believes in Christ, he believes in the Holy Spirithe is more than a match for me. To those that are under his leadership, he cries, To your tents! He bids them flee away and escape, for he knows that there can be no victory for them when they come into collision with true God-given faith! He cannot bear to look at it. It blinds himthe lustrous splendor of that great shield of faith which shines as though a man did hang the sun upon his arm and bear it before him into the frayblinds even the mighty Prince of Darkness! Satan does but glance at it and straightway he takes to flight, for he cannot stand it. He knows it is the thing which most of all helps to overthrow his kingdom and destroy his power! Therefore, Believer, cling to your faith! Be like the young Spartan warrior who would either bring his shield home with him or be brought home dead upon his shield. Cast not away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward. Whatever else you have not, have faith in God. Believe in the Christ of God. Rest your souls entire confidence upon the faithful promise and the faithful Promiser and, if you do so, Satans attacks upon you will all be in vain!   
That is my first pointobserve the grand point of Satanic attack.   
II. Now, secondly, observe THE PECULIAR DANGER OF FAITH. That your faith fail not.   
Did Peters faith fail? Yes, and no. It failed in a measure, but it did not altogether fail. It failed in a measure, for he was human, but it did not altogether fail, for, at the back of it, there was the superhuman power which comes through the pleading of Christ. Poor Peter! He denied his Master, yet his faith did not utterly fail and, I will show you why it did not. If you and I, Beloved, are ever permitted to dishonor God and to deny our Lord, as Peter did, yet may God in mercy keep us from the utter and entire failure of our faith as He kept Peter!   
Notice, first, there was still some faith in Peter, even when he had denied his Master, for when the Lord turned and looked at him, he went out and wept bitterly. If there had still not been the true faith in Peter, the Master might have looked upon him long before a tear would have coursed down his cheeks. The Lord not only looked on Judas, but He gave him a sop with Him out of the dish. And He even let the traitor put his lips on Him and kiss Him. But all that had no weight with Judas. The reason why Christs look had such an effect on Peter was because there was still some faith in Peter. You may blow as long as you like at the cold coals, but you will get no fire. But I have, sometimes, seen a servant kneel down when there has been just a little flame left in the coal in a corner of the grate, and she has blown it tenderly and gently so as to revive it. It is not quite out, she says and, at last, there has been a good fire once again! May God grant that we may never come to that sad condition, but, if we do, may He, of His Grace, grant that there may still be that blessed little faith left, that weak and feeble faith which, through the breathing upon it of the Spirit of God, shall yet be fanned into a flame!

We are sure that there was this faith still in Peter or else what would he have done? What did Judas do? Judas did two things. First, he went to a priest, or to priests, and confessed to them. And then he went out and hanged himselfthe two things were strangely connected. Peter did neither, yet, if he had not had faith, he might have done both. To publicly deny his Master three times and to support his denial with oaths and curses, even when that Master was close by and in His greatest need, must have put Peter into most imminent peril. And if there had not been, within his heart, faith that his Master could yet pardon and restore him, he might, in his despair, have done precisely what the traitor Judas did. Or, if he had not gone to that extremity of guilt, he would have hidden himself away from the rest of the Apostles. But, instead of doing so, we soon find him, again, with JohnI do not wonder that he was with John. They were old companions, but, in addition to that, the Beloved John had so often leaned his head on the Masters bosom that he had caught the sweet infection of his Saviors tenderness and, therefore, he was just the one with whom Peter would wish to associate.   
I think that if I had ever denied my Lord as Peter did, in that public way, I would have run away and hidden myself from all my former companions. But Peter did not, you see. He seemed to say to himself, The Master, with His dear tender heart, can still forgive me and receive me. So he clings to the disciples and especially to John. Yes, and notice that on the day of our Lords Resurrection, Peter was the first disciple to enter the sepulcher, for, though the other disciple did outrun Peter and reach the grave first, yet he went not in until Peter led the way. The Lord is risen, indeed, and has appeared to Simon, is a remarkable passage. Paul, writing concerning Christs Resurrection, says that, He was seen of Cephas, that is, Peter. There was some special manifestation of our blessed Master to Simon Peter who was waiting for it, and privileged to witness itand this showed that his faith was kept from failing through the Saviors prayers.   
Now, Beloved, I say no more about Peter, but I speak to you about your own faith. Are you greatly troubled? Then I pray that your faith may not fail. It is shaken. It is severely tried, but God grant that it may not fail! Something whispers within your heart, Give up all religion, it is not true. To that lie, answer, Get you behind me, Satan, for the religion of Jesus Christ is eternally, assuredly, Infallibly true. Cling to it, for it is your life! Or, perhaps, the fiend whispers, It is true enough to others, but it is not meant for you, you are not one of the Lords people. Well, if you cannot come to Christ as a saint, come to Him as a sinner! If you dare not come as a child to sit at His Table, come as a dog to eat the crumbs that fall under it! Only come and never give up your faith!   
If the arch-fiend whispers, again, You have been a deceiver! Your profession is all a mistake, or a lie! Say to him, Well, if it is so, there is still forgiveness in Christ for all who come unto God by Him. Perhaps you are coming to the Savior for the first timeyou mean to cast yourself upon the blood and merit of Jesus even if you have never done so before. I pray for you, dear coming one! O gracious Savior, do not let Satan crush out the faith of even the weakest of Your people! Blessed Intercessor, plead for that poor trembler in whom faith is almost dying out! Great High Priest, intercede for him, that his faith may not utterly fail him and that he may still cling to You!   
What is to become of us if we have not faith in Jesus? I know that there are some who seem to get on well without it. So may the dogs. So may the wild beasts. They get on well enough without the childrens garments or the childrens breadbut you and I cannot. The moment I am unbelieving, I am unhappy. It is not a vain thing for me to believe in Christit is my life, it is my strength, it is my joy! I am a lost man and it were better for me that I had never been born unless I have the privilege of believing! Give up faith? Remember what Satan said concerning Job, Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life? And our life is wrapped up in our faith in Christ! We cannot give it up and we will not give it up! Come on, fiends of Hell, or mockers of earthwe will not give it up, we will hold it fast, for it is part of the very warp and woof of our being! We believe in God and in His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And it is our great concern that our faith should be well guarded and protected, for we know the peculiar danger to which it is exposed when it is assailed by Satan.   
III. Now I will close my discourse by speaking, for only a very few minutes, upon THE BELIEVERS GREAT PRESERVATIVE AND DEFENSE.   
What is the great protection of our faith? Our Saviors intercession! Prayer is always good, it is always a blessed thing, but notice that great letter-word in the text, I have prayed for you. It is the intercession of Christ that preserves our faithand there are three things about it which make it precious beyond all priceit is prevalent, prevenient and pertinent. First, it is prevalent, for, if Jesus pleads, He must prevail. It is prevenient, for, before the temptation comes to Peter, He says, I have prayed for you. Satan has but obtained, by his asking, the permission to tempt you, but I have already prayed for you.   
And, then, it was pertinent, that is, to the point. Christ had prayed the best prayer possiblethat your faith fail not. Peter would not have known that this was to be the chief point of attack by Satan. He might have thought that Satan would attack his love. The Lord seems to hint at His thought about that by saying to him, afterwards, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me? But the Savior knew that the hottest part of the battle would rage around Fort Faith and, therefore, He prayed that the fortress might be well garrisoned and never be captured by the enemy. And it was not!  
Whenever I begin to talk to you about the intercession of Christ, I feel inclined to sit down and let you think, and look up, and listen till you hear that Voice, matchless in its music, pleading, pleading, pleading, with the Father! It were much better for you to realize it than for me to describe it. It was a blessed thing to hear ones mother prayby accident, as we sayto pass the door that was ajar and to hear Mother pleading for her boy or her girl. It is a very touching thing to hear your child praying for her father, or your wife breathing out her warm desires for her Beloved. I do not know anything more charming than to hear, now and then, a stray prayer that was never meant to be heard on earth, but only in Heaven. I like such eaves-droppings. Oh, but listen! It is Jesus who is praying! He shows His wounds and pleads the merit of His great Sacrifice and, wonder of wonders, He pleads for me, and for you! Happy man, happy woman, to have our faith preserved by such a mighty preservative as thisthe intercession of Christ!   
I want you to especially notice that this intercession is the pleading of One who, in the text, seems to directly oppose Himself to the great adversary. Satan has asked for you by asking that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you by asking, (so I will venture to paraphrase it) that your faith fail not. There stands Satan. You cannot see him and you need not want to, but that grim monster who has made kings and princes tremble, and has plucked angels from their spheres of light, and hurled bright spirits down from Heaven to Hell, stands there to assail you! And you may well be afraid, for God, Himself, permits him to sift you! Ah, but there also stands the Ever-Blessed One, before whom an angel, fallen or unfallen, is but a tiny spark compared with the sun! There He stands, girt about the chest with the golden girdle of His faithfulness, robed in the fair white linen of His matchless righteousness. Upon His head is a crown of glory that far outshines all constellations of stars and suns! And He opposes His Divine pleading to the demoniacal asking of the fallen one. Are you still afraid? It seems to me unspeakably blessed to see it written here, Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, and then to see over the top of it these words, but I have prayed for you. Oh, blessed, but! How it seems to cast the fallen angel back into the bottomless Pit and to bind him with chains, and set a seal upon his prisonBut I have prayed for you. Tempt on, then, O Satan! Tempt at your worst, for there is no fear when this glorious shield of gold, the intercession of the Savior, covers the entire person of the poor attacked one! I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.   
And then my last word is thisit is an intercession which is absolutely certain of success. In fact, He who offers it anticipates its success and discounts it by giving this precept to His servantand when you are converted. Sure pledge, then, that he will be converted, that he will be turned back, however far he wanders! When you are restored, strengthen your brethren. Then, for certain, he will be restored, or else the Savior would not have given him a precept which could only be available if a certain, unlikely contingency should occur! O you who are a true child of God, you may be drenched, but you shall never be drowned! O warrior of the Cross, your shield may be covered with fiery darts, thick as the saplings of a young forestbut no dart shall ever reach your heart! You may be wounded in head and hand and foot. You may be a mass of scars, but your life is given you! To Christ are you given and you shall come out even from between the jaws of deathand you shall overcome Satan by Christs power! Only trust Christ! Only trust Him! Cling to your faith, Beloved. Cling to your faith! I would like to get a hold of that young man who has lately been listening to skeptical teachers, and to whisper in his ear, Cling to your faith, young man, for, in losing that, you will lose all.

And to you who, alas, have fallen into sin after having made a profession of religion, let me say that, however far you have gone astray, still believe that Jesus is able to forgive you! Come back to Him and seek His pardon now! And you, my hoary-headed Brothers and Sisters, whose hair is whitening for Heaven, are you sorely beset by all sorts of temptations? Well, give me your hand, for I, too, know what this warfare means. Let us believe in God, my Brothers and Sisterslet us believe in God! Though He should break us down worse than ever. Though He should set us up as a target and let the devil shoot all the arrows from his quiver at us, let us still believe in God and come to this point to which my soul has come full often, and to which Job came of old, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Whatever He does to meif He shall never smile upon me againI will still believe Him, I can do no other. I dare not doubt Him! I must confide in Him! Where is there any ground for confidence if it is not in the God that cannot lie, and in the Christ of the Everlasting Covenant whom He has set forth to be the propitiation for human sin, and in the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to us?   
May the blessed Trinity save and keep us all, for our Lord Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 22:7-34; 54-62.**

Verses 7-20. Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where will You that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when you are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he enters. And you shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master says unto you, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them. With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the wine, until the Kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament(Or, Covenant).

20, 21. In My blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table. What a shadow this revelation must have cast over that solemn feast, over the Saviors heart and over the minds of all His attached disciples! We can scarcely imagine what pangs tore His loving spirit. He could have used the language of David with even deeper emphasis, and said, 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. But it was you, a man My equal, My guide and My acquaintance. The hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table. O Beloved, I pray that you and I may never betray our Master! If ever we should so fail as to deny Him, may the Lord stop us where Peter fell and never suffer us to betray Him as Judas did!

22. And truly the Son of Man goes, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed! The decree of God does not lessen the responsibility of man for his action. Even though it is predetermined of God, the man does it of his own free willand on him falls the full guilt of it.

23, 24. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. Be astonished, dear Friends, as you read, in such a connection as this, There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. What? While yet the anxious question as to which of them was the traitor was being passed round, Lord, is it I? Is it so closely followed by another question, Which of us shall be highest in the Kingdom? Oh, the awful intrusiveness of pride and ambition! How it will come in and defile the very Holy of Holies! May God prevent our falling victims to it! The last question for a Christian to ever ask is, How may I win honor among men? The one question for a Believer should be, How can I glorify my Master ? Very often, that can best be done by taking the very lowest place in his Church.

25, 26. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves. Let every respect be given to the elder and let such as God honors be honored among usbut let no man honor himself, or seek honor for himself! After all, in Christs Kingdom, the way to ascend is to descend! Did not the Master act thus? He descended that He might ascend and fill all things! And so must His disciples! Less, and less, and less, and less must we becomeand so we shall really be, in His sightmore, and more, and more, and more!

27. For who is greater, he that sits at meat, or he that serves? Is it not he that sits at meat? But I am among you as He that serves. For He had just then taken a towel and girded Himself, and washed their feetso becoming Servus servorum, the Servant of Servants, though He was, in very truth, the King of Kings!

28. You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations. There is a reward to the righteous, though they serve not for reward, for the Lord says

29, 30. And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father has appointed unto Me; that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Ah, but see what follows! No sooner, in this Chapter, does the thought seem to rise than it is dashed down again! The brightness always has a shadow cast across it,

31, 32. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren. We are thinking about thrones and about which of us shall have the loftiest thronebut see how the Master is thinking about the necessary while we are doting upon the superfluous! He thinks of our needs while we are dreaming of something great. What a blessing it is that we have our Savior praying for us when we, ourselves, may be fancying that we need not pray! Our hands are ready for the scepter and we are anxious to sit down on the thronewhen the Lord knows that our proper place is at the footstool, pleading for mercy!

33. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You, both into prison, and to death. That is bravely spoken, Peterand yet it is very foolishly said, too! He spoke out of his very heart and he meant what he said, but Peter did not know what a poor weak body Peter really was! His Master understood him far better.

34. And He said, I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day, before that you shall thrice deny that you know Me. And so it came to pass. Let as read a part of the sad story, beginning at the 54th verse.

54. Then took they Him, and led Him, and brought Him into the High Priests house. And Peter followed afar off. I do not think that Peter was to be blamed for that. I do not see how he could very well have followed any nearer, for he was already a marked man. That cutting off of the ear of Malchus had made him especially prominent among the Apostles, even if he had not been well known before! He got into the crowd and came after his Master at such a distance as seemed safe for him.

55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. I do think that he was to be blamed for that action, for it brought him into dangerous company. Better be cold, than go and warm your hands in ungodly society!

56. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him. As the flame came flashing up every now and then, she looked at him, and Peter was troubled by her gazeshe, earnestly looked upon him.

56-59. And said, This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, You are also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour, later, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth, this fellow also was with Him; for he is a Galilean. For he got to talking to this evil company and his speech had betrayed him!

60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what you say. Another Evangelist tells us that he began to curse and to swear, as if that was the surest proof that he could possibly give that he did not know Jesusfor, when you hear a man swear, you know at once that he is no Christianyou may conclude that safely enough! So Peter thought that to prove that he was no follower of Christ, he would use such evil language as the ungodly speak.

60, 61. And immediately, while he yet spoke, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. God has all things in His hands. He has servants everywhere and the rooster shall crow, by the secret movement of His Providence, just when God wills! And there is, perhaps, as much of Divine ordination about the crowing of a rooster as about the ascending of an emperor to his throne! Things are only little and great according to their bearings and God reckoned not the crowing bird to be a small thing since it was to bring a wanderer back to his Savior, for, just as the rooster crowed, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. That was a different look from the one which the girl had given him, but that look broke his heart.

62. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the roster crows, you shall deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly. How many there are who sin with Peter, but who never weep with Peter! Oh, if we have ever transgressed in such a way as he did, let us never cease to weep! Above all, let us begin at once to lament it and rest not till the Master looks again, and says by that look, I have blotted out all your transgressions; return unto Me.

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THE WEAKENED CHRIST STRENGTHENED   
NO. 2769

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 9, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JUNE 5, 1881.

**And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him. Luke 22:43.**

I SUPPOSE that this incident happened immediately after our Lords first prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. His pleading became so fervent, so intense, that it forced from Him a bloody sweat. He was, evidently, in a great agony of fear as He prayed and wrestled even unto blood. We are told, by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that He was heard in that He feared. It is probable that this angel came in answer to that prayer. This was the Fathers reply to the cry of His fainting Son who was enduring an infinity of sorrow because of His peoples sin and who must, therefore, be Divinely upheld as to His Manhood, lest He should be utterly crushed beneath the terrible weight that was pressing upon His holy soul.

Scarcely had our Savior prayed before the answer to His petition came. It reminds us of Daniels supplication and of the angelic messenger who was caused to fly so swiftly that as soon as the prayer had left the Prophets lips, Gabriel stood there with the reply to it! So, Brothers and Sisters, whenever your times of trial come, always take yourselves to your knees. Whatever shape your trouble may takeif, to you, it should even seem to be a faint representation of your Lords agony in Gethsemaneput yourselves into the same posture as that in which He sustained the great shock that came upon Him. Kneel down and cry to your Father who is in Heaven, who is able to save you from death, who will prevent the trial from utterly destroying you, who will give you strength that you may be able to endure it and will bring you through it to the praise of the glory of His Grace.

That is the first lesson for us to learn from our Lords experience in Gethsemanethe blessing of prayer. He has bidden us pray, but He has done more than that, for He has set us the example of prayer and, if example is, as we are sure it is, far more powerful than precept, let us not fail to imitate our Savior in the exercise of potent, prevalent, repeated supplication whenever our spirits are cast down and we are in sore distress of soul. Possibly you have sometimes said, I feel so sorrowful that I cannot pray. No, Brother, that is the very time when you must pray. As the spices, when bruised, give forth all the more fragrance because of the bruising, so let the sorrow of your spirit cause it to send forth the more fervent prayer to the God who is both able and willing to deliver you! You must express your sorrow in one way or another, so let it not be expressed in murmuring, but in supplication! It is a vile temptation, on the part of Satan, to keep you away from the Mercy Seat when you have most need to go therebut do not yield to that temptation! Pray till you can pray and if you find that you are not filled with the Spirit of supplication, use whatever measure of the sacred bedewing you haveand so, by-and-by, you shall have the baptism of the Spirit and prayer shall become to you a happier and more joyful exercise than it is at present. Our Savior said to His disciples, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, yet then, above all times, He was in an agony of prayer and, in proportion to the intensity of His sorrow was the intensity of His supplication.

In our text, there are two things to note. First, our Lords weakness. And, secondly, our Lords strengthening.   
I. First, then, let us meditate for a little while upon OUR LORDS WEAKNESS.   
That He was exceedingly weak is clear from the fact that an angel came from Heaven to strengthen Him, for the holy angels never do anything that is superfluous. They are the servants of an eminently practical God who never does that which it is unnecessary for Him to do. If Jesus had not needed strengthening, an angel would not have come from Heaven to strengthen Him. But how strange it sounds, to our ears, that the Lord of Life and Glory should be so weak that He should need to be strengthened by one of His own creatures! How extraordinary it seems that He who is very God of very God, should, nevertheless, when He appeared on earth as Immanuel, God With Us, so completely take upon Himself our nature that He should become so weak as to need to be sustained by angelic agency! This struck some of the older saints as being derogatory to His Divine dignity, so some manuscripts of the New Testament omit this passageit is supposed that the verse was struck out by some who claimed to be orthodox, lest, perhaps, the Arians should lay hold upon it and use it to bolster up their heresies. I cannot be sure who struck it out, but I am not altogether surprised that they should have done so. They had no right to do anything of the kind, for whatever is revealed in the Scriptures must be true, but they seemed to shudder at the thought that the Son of God should ever have been so weakened as to need the support of an angelic messenger to strengthen Him.   
Yet, Brothers and Sisters, this incident proves the reality of our Saviors Manhood. Here you can perceive how fully He shares the weakness of our humanitynot in spiritual weakness, so as to become guilty of any sin but in mental weakness, so as to be capable of great depression of spirit. And in physical weakness, so as to be exhausted to the last degree by His terrible bloody sweat. What is extreme weakness? It is something different from pain, for sharp pain evidences at least some measure of strength, but perhaps some of you know what it is to feel as if you were scarcely aliveyou were so weak that you could hardly realize that you were actually living! The blood flowed, if it flowed at all, but very slowly in the canals of your veinseverything seemed stagnant within you. You were very faint, you almost wished that you could become unconscious, for the consciousness you had was extremely painful. You were so weak and sick that you seemed almost ready to die. Our Masters words, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, prove that the shadow of impending dissolution hung darkly over His spirit, soul and body, so that He could truly quote the 22nd Psalm and say, You have brought Me into the dust of death. I think, Beloved, that you ought to be glad it was so with your Lord, for now you can see how completely He is made like His brethren in their mental depression and physical weakness, as well as in other respects.   
It will help you to get an idea of the true Manhood of Christ if you remember that this was not the only time when He was weak. He, the Son of Man, was once a Babe and, therefore, all the tender ministries that have to be exercised because of the helplessness of infancy were also necessary in His case. Wrapped in swaddling bands and lying in a manger, that little Child was, all the while, the mighty God, though He condescended to keep His Omnipotence in abeyance in order that He might redeem His people from their sins. Doubt not His true Humanity and learn from it how tenderly He is able to sympathize with all the ills of childhood and, all the griefs of boyhood which are not so few or so small as some people imagine!   
Besides being thus an Infant and gradually growing in stature just as other children do, our Lord Jesus was often very weary. How the angels must have wondered as they saw Him, who sways the scepter of universal sovereignty and marshals all the starry hosts according to His will, as He, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well at Sychar, waiting for the woman whose soul He had gone to win and, wiping the sweat from His brow and resting Himself after having traveled over the burning acres of the land! The Prophet Isaiah truly said that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary. That is the Divine side of His glorious Nature. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. That was the Human side of His Nature. We read that He did eat nothing during the forty days temptation in the wilderness and, He afterwards hungered. Have any of you ever known what it has been to suffer the bitterness of hunger? Then remember that our Lord Jesus Christ also endured that pang. He, whom we rightly worship and adore as God Blessed Forever, as the Son of Man, the Mediator between God and men, hungered! And He also thirsted, for He said to the woman at the well, Give Me to drink.  
In addition to this, our Savior was often so weary that He slept, which is another proof of His true Humanity. He was so tired, once, that He slept even when the boat was tossing to and fro in a storm and was ready to sink. On one occasion we read that the disciples took Him even as He was in the boat, which seems to me to imply even more than it says, namely, that He was so worn out that He was scarcely able to get into the boat, but, they took Him even as He was, and there He fell asleep. We know, moreover, that Jesus weptnot merely once, or twice, but many times. And we also know what completes the proof of His Humanity that He died. It was a strange phenomenon that He, to whom the Father has given, to have life in Himself, should have been called to pass through the gloomy shades of death, that He might in all points be made like unto His brethren and so be able to fully sympathize with us! O you weak ones, look how weak your Lord became that He might make you strong! We might read that familiar passage, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich, in a slightly different waythough He was strong, yet for your sakes He became weak, that you, through His weakness might be strong. Therefore, Beloved, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

What was the reason for the special weakness of our Savior when in the Garden of Gethsemane? I cannot now go fully into that matter, but I want you to notice what it was that tried Him so severely there. I suppose, first, it was contact with sin. Our Savior had always seen the effects of sin upon others, but it had never come home to Him so closely as it did when He entered that garden, for there, more than ever before, the iniquity of His people was made to meet upon Himand that contact aroused in Him a holy horror! You and I are not perfectly pure, so we are not as horrified at sin as we ought to be, yet sometimes we can say, with the Psalmist, Horror has taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Your Law. But for our gracious Saviorlisten to the Inspired Words, they are none of mineto be numbered with the transgressors, must have been an awful thing to His pure and holy soul! He seemed to shrink back from such a position and it was necessary that He should be strengthened in order that He might be able to endure the contact with that terrible mass of iniquity!   
But He had, in addition, to bear the burden of that sin. It was not sufficient for Him to come into contact with itbut it is written, The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. And as He began to fully realize all that was involved in His position as the great Sin-Bearer, His spirit seemed to droop and He became exceedingly weak. Ah, Sir, if you have to bear the burden of your own sin when you appear before the Judgment Seat of God, it will sink you to the lowest Hell! But what must Christs agony have been when He was bearing the sin of all His people? As the mighty mass of their guilt came rolling upon Him, His Father saw that the Human soul and the Human body both needed to be upheld, otherwise they would have been utterly crushed before the atoning work had been accomplished.   
Contact with sin and the bearing of sins penalty were reason enough to produce the Saviors excessive weakness in Gethsemane, but, in addition, He was conscious of the approach of death. I have heard some people say that we ought not to shrink from death, but I believe that in proportion as a man is a good man, death will be distasteful to him. You and I have become, to a large extent, familiarized with the thought of death. We know that we must dieunless the Lord should come soon for all who have gone before us have done sothe seeds of death are sown in us and, like some fell disease, they are beginning to work within our nature. It is natural that we should expect to die, for we know that we are mortal. If anybody were to tell us that we should be annihilated any reasonable and sensible man would be horrified at the ideafor that is not natural to the soul of man. Well, now, death was as unnatural to Christ as annihilation would be to us! It had never come to be a part of His Nature. His holy soul had none of the seeds of death in it and His untainted bodywhich had never known any kind of disease or corruption, but was as pure as when, first of all, that holy thing was created by the Spirit of Godthat also shrank back from death! There were not in it any of the things which make death natural and, therefore, because of the very purity of His Nature, He recoiled at the approach of death and needed to be especially strengthened in order to meet the last enemy.   
Probably, however, it was the sense of utter desertion that was preying upon His mind and so produced that extremity of weakness. All His disciples had failed Him and presently would forsake Him. Judas had lifted up his heel against Him and there was not one of all His professed followers who would faithfully cleave to Him. Kings, princes, scribes and rulers were all united against Himand of the people, there were none with Him. Worst of all, by the necessity of His expiatory Sacrifice and His Substitution for His people, His Father, Himself, withdrew the Light of His Countenance from Him and, even in the garden, He was beginning to feel that agony of soul which, on the Cross, wrung from Him that doleful cry, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? And that sense of utter loneliness and desertion, added to all that He had endured, made Him so exceedingly weak that it was necessary that He should be specially strengthened for the ordeal through which He had still to pass.   
II. Now, in the second place, let us meditate for a little while upon OUR LORDS STRENGTHENING. There appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him.   
It is night and there He kneels, under the olives, offering up, as Paul says, prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death. While wrestling there, He is brought into such a state of agony that He sweats great drops of blood and, suddenly, there flashes before Him, like a meteor from the midnight sky, a bright spirit that had come straight from the Throne of God to minister to Him in His hour of need.  
Think of the condescension on Christs part to allow an angel to come and strengthen Him. He is the Lord of angels as well as of men. At His bidding, they fly more swiftly than the lightning flash to do His will. Yet, in His extremity of weakness, He was succored by one of them! It was a wondrous stoop for the infinitely-great and ever-blessed Christ of God to consent that a spirit of His own creation should appear unto Him and strengthen Him.   
But while I admire the condescension which permitted one angel to come, I equally admire the self-restraint which allowed only one to come, for, if He had so pleased, He might have appealed to His Father and He would at once have sent to Him more than twelve legions of angels. No, He did not make such a request. He rejoiced to have one to strengthen Him, but He would not have any more. Oh, what matchless beauties are combined in our blessed Savior! You may look on this side of the shield and you will perceive that it is of pure gold. Then you may look on the other side of it, but you will not discover that it is brass, as in the fable, for it is gold all through! Our Lord Jesus is altogether lovely. What He does, or what He refrains from doing equally deserves the praises of His people.   
How could the angel strengthen Christ? That is a very natural enquiry, but it is quite possible that when we have answered that question as well as we can, we shall not have given a full and satisfactory reply to it. Yet I can conceive that, in some mysterious manner, an angel from Heaven may have actually infused fresh vigor into the physical constitution of Christ. I cannot positively affirm that it was so, but it seems to me a very likely thing. We know that God can suddenly communicate new strength to fainting spirits and, certainly, if He willed it, He could thus lift up the drooping head of His Son and make Him feel strong and resolute again.   
Perhaps it was so, but, in any case, it must have strengthened the Savior to feel that He was in pure company. It is a great joy to a man who is battling for the right against a crowd who love the wrong, to find a comrade by his side who loves the Truth of God as he loves it. To a pure mind, obliged to listen to the ribald jests of the licentious, I know of nothing that is more strengthening than to get a whisper in the ear from one who says, I, too, love that which is chaste and pure, and hate the filthy conversation of the wicked. So, perhaps, the mere fact of that shining angel standing by the Saviors side, or reverently bowing before Him, may in itself have strengthened Him.   
Next to that, was the tender sympathy which this angelic ministration proved. I can imagine that all the holy angels leant over the battlements of Heaven to watch the Saviors wondrous life. And now that they see Him in the garden and perceive, by His whole appearance, and His desperate agony, that death is drawing to Him, they are so astonished that they crave permission that at least one of their number shall go down to see if He cannot carry succor to Him from His Fathers house above. I can imagine the angels saying, Did we not sing of Him at Bethlehem when He was born? Did not some of us minister to Him when He was in the desert and among wild beasts, hungry after His long fast and terrible temptation? Has He not been seen of angels all the while He has been on earth! Oh, let some one of us go to His relief! And I can readily suppose that God said to Gabriel, Your name means, The Strength of Godgo and strengthen your Lord in Gethsemane, And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven strengthening Him. And I think that He was strengthened, at least in part, by observing the sympathy of all the heavenly host with Him in His season of secret sorrow. He might seem to be alone as Man, but as Lord and King, He had on His side an innumerable company of angels who waited to do His willand here was one of them, come to assure Him that He was not alone, after all.   
Next, no doubt, our Savior was comforted by the angels willing service. You know, dear Brothers and Sisters, how a little act of kindness will cheer us when we are very low in spirit. If we are despised and rejected of men. If we are deserted and defamed by those who ought to have dealt differently with us, even a tender look from a child will help to remove our depression! In times of loneliness it is something even to have a dog with you, to lick your hand and show you such kindness as is possible from him. And our blessed Master, who always appreciated and still appreciates the least service rendered to Himfor not a cup of cold water, given to a disciple in Christs name, shall lose its rewardwas cheered by the devotion and homage of the ministering spirit that came from Heaven to strengthen Him! I wonder if the angel worshipped HimI think that He could do no less and it must have been something to worship the blood-red Son of God. Oh, that any of us could have paid Him such homage as that! The time for such special ministry as that is now over, yet my faith seems to bring Him back here, at this moment, just as if we were in Gethsemane. I adore You, blessed eternal Godnever more Godlike than when You did prove Your perfect Manhood by sweating great drops of blood in the awful weakness of Your depression in the Garden of Sorrow!

Perhaps, too, the angels presence comforted and strengthened the Savior as being a sort of foretaste of His final victory. What was this angel but the pioneer of all the heavenly host that would come to meet Him when the fight was over? He was one who, in full confidence of His Lords victory, had flown before the rest to pay homage to the conquering Son of God, who would tread the old dragon beneath His feet! You remember how, when Jesus was born, first there came one angel who began to speak of Him to the shepherds, and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. The first angel had, as it were, stolen a march upon his brethren, and got there before them, but, no sooner was the wondrous news proclaimed through Heavens streets, than every angel resolved to overtake him before his message was completed! So, here again is one that had come as an outrider to remind His Lord of His ultimate victoryand there were many more afterwards to come with the same glad tidingsbut, to the Saviors heart, that angels coming was a token that He would lead captivity captive and that myriads of other bright spirits would crowd around Him and cry, Lift up your heads, O you gates; and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors; that the King of Glory, fresh from His blood-red shame, may enter into His heavenly and eternal inheritance!   
Yet once more, is it not very likely that this angel brought the Savior a message from Heaven? The angels are generally Gods messengers, so they have something to communicate from Him and, perhaps, this angel, bending over the Saviors prostrate form, whispered in His ear, Be of good cheer. You must pass through all this agony, but You will thereby save an innumerable multitude of the sons and daughters of men who will love and worship You and Your Father forever and forever. He is with You even at this moment. Though He must hide His face from You because of the requirements of justice that the Atonement may be complete, His heart is with You and He loves You always. Oh, how our Lord Jesus must have been cheered if some such words as these were whispered into His ears!   
Now, in closing, let us try to learn the lessons of this incident. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, you and I may have to pass through great griefs certainly ours will never be so great as those of our Divine Masterbut we may have to follow through the same waters. Well, at such times, as I have already said, let us resort to prayer and let us be content to receive comfort from the humblest instrumentality. That is too simple an observation, you say. It is a very simple one, but it is one that some people have need to remember. You remember how Naaman the Syrian was healed through the remark of a little captive girl and, sometimes, great saints have been cheered by the words of very little people. You remember how Dr. Guthrie, when he was dying, wanted a childs hymn? It was just like hegreat, glorious, simple-minded child-man that he was. He said what you and I must sometimes have felt that we neededa childs hymna childs joyful song to cheer us up in our hour of depression and sorrow!   
There are some people who seem as if they would not be converted unless they can see some eminent minister. Even that will not suit some of themthey need a special revelation from Heaven. They will not take a text from the Biblethough I cannot conceive of anything better than thatbut they think that if they could dream something, or if they could hear words spoken in the cool of the evening by some strange voice in the sky, then they might be converted. Well, Brothers and Sisters, if you will not eat the apples that grow on trees, you must not expect angels to come and bring them to you! We have a more sure word of testimony in the Bible than we can have anywhere else. If you will not be converted by that Word, it is a great pityit is much more than a pity, it is a great sin! If your Lord and Master condescended to receive consolation from an angel whom He had Himself created, you ought to be willing to gather comfort from the feeblest speech of the poorest personfrom the least of the people of God when they try to cheer you.   
I have known an old professor say of a young minister, It is no use for me to hear him, for he has not had the experience that I have had, so how can he instruct or help me? O Sirs, I have known many old saints get more comfort out of godly boys than they did from those of their own age! God knows how, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, to perfect praise and I have never heard that He has done that out of the mouths of old men! Why is that? Because they know too much! But the children do not know anything and, therefore, out of their mouths the praise of God is perfect. So let us never despise Gods messengers, however humble they may be.   
The next lesson is while you should be thankful for the least comforter, yet, in your times of deepest need, you may expect the greatest comforters to come to you. Let me remind you that an angel appeared to Joseph when Herod was seeking Christs life. Then, later, angels appeared to Christ when the devil had been tempting Him. And now, at Gethsemane, when there was a peculiar manifestation of diabolical malice, for it was the hour of the powers of darknessthen, when the devil was loose and doing his utmost against Christan angel came from Heaven to strengthen Him. So, when you are in your heaviest trials, you shall have your greatest strength. Perhaps you will have little to do with angels till you get into deep trouble and then shall the promise be fulfilled, He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. They are always ready to be your keepers, but, in the matter of spiritual strengthening, these holy spirits may have little to do with some of you until you stand foot to foot with Apollyon and have to fight stern battles with the Evil One himself. It is worthwhile to go through rough places to have angels to bear you up! It is worthwhile to go to Gethsemane if there we may have angels from Heaven to strengthen us! So, be of good comfort, Brothers and Sisters, whatever lies before you. The darker your experience is, the brighter will be that which comes out of it. The disciples feared as they entered the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration, but when they had passed right into it, they saw Jesus, Moses, and Elijah in Glory! O you who are the true followers of Christ, fear not the clouds that lower darkly over you, for you shall see the brightness behind them and the Christ in them! And your spirits shall be blessed.   
But if you are not believing in Christ, I am indeed grieved for you, for you shall have the sorrow without the solacethe cup of bitterness without the angelthe agony, and that forever, without the messenger from Heaven to console you! Oh, that you would all believe in Jesus! God help you so to do for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**LUKE 22:14-46.**

Verses 14-16. And when the hour was come, He sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And it is fulfilled, for Christ Himself is the Lamb of our Passover. His blood has been shed and sprinkled. His people have been brought up out of their Egyptian bondage and, by faith, they feed upon Him and are glad. How sweetly the Passover melted away into the Lords Supper and how graciously did our Savior thus teach us that, as a rule, He does not make violent changes in the development of His peoples spiritual life, but He leads them on gradually from one stage to another! There may be, sometimes, very sudden elevations, but, as a general rule, we go from strength to strength, a step at a time, and the Truth of God is revealed to us little by little.

17, 18. So He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come. This was the Passover cupthe cup with which they concluded the paschal supper. At such times they also usually began to chant a Psalm in happy unison. Just at that point, Christ interjected the first part of the celebration of the new ordinancethe Lords Supper, into which the paschal supper was to melt.

19. So He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me. It was clearly impossible that He could have meant that bread to be literally His body, because His body was there at the table! Therefore, the misunderstanding, or misrepresentation of the Church of Rome is altogether without excuse. Our Savior plainly intended to say, This bread represents My body; it is an emblem, a symbol, of My body. If this had been spoken concerning the bread after Christ had been dead and gone, and not before, there might have been some warrant for the teaching of the Papists, but there cannot be any such warrant, as He used the words while He was sitting there with His Apostles. Let us be careful not to lose the true meaning of Christs words while we combat the false interpretation that has been given to them.

20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you. He could not have meant that, literally, that cup was the New CovenantI never heard of anybody who thought He did. Why, then, take one part of the ordinance literally, if not the other? But our Lord did mean that the contents of that cup represented the blood which seals and ratifies the Eternal Covenant on which our hopes are built.

21. But, behold, the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table. Lamentable circumstancesad index of what often still occurs! The worst traitors to Christ are not outside, but inside the visible Church. There they have the best opportunity for doing mischief. There they can give the unkindest cut of all. God grant that none of us may be among that miserable number!

22. And truly the Son of Man goes as it was determined, but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed! The fact that it was determined in the eternal decrees of God, that Christ should die, did not at all diminish the responsibility of all who had a share in bringing about that death. Learn, Beloved, to believe firmly in Divine Predestination without doubting human responsibility. Even though you may not be able to show how these two things agree, do not be anxious about that matter! Be satisfied to believe what you cannot understand. Both these things are true and they are, both of them, in this verse.

23, 24. And they began to enquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. What a strange thing that it should have been so! Is there any such strife among us here? If so, how utterly unworthy are we to be the disciples of such a Master as our Lord Jesus Christ!

25, 26. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves. You know, Brothers, that it always will be so. If a man tries to be great in the Church, somehow or other his Brothers generally think very little of him! But he who is willing to servewhose one ambition it is to lay himself out for the Glory of his Master, and for the general goodthat man usually has a great deal more honor than he would have expected to receive. The way to be great in the Church is to be serviceable to all around us, to be meek and lowly, to be willing to wait upon others. We have good reason for being the servants of our Brothers and Sisters when we remember the humble position that our Lord Himself assumed.

27. For which is greater, he that sits at the table, or he that serves? Is it not he that sits the table? But I am among you as He that serves. He served in the very humblest capacity, for did He not even wash the disciples feet? And if He, who was the greatest of all, thus condescended to perform the lowliest service, who among us shall be so lifted up as to suppose that no common work is good enough for him? Brethren, we must be humble, or else we shall be humbled! And let me remark that the latter experience is by no means a pleasant one, while the former experience is most sweet and gracious. God give us the Grace to be humble!

28-30. You are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father has appointed unto Me; that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Yes, there are thrones and a Kingdom for those who are faithful to the King of kings! But there is something else to think of beside that kind of glory, for notice our Saviors next words.

31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. And between us and the Kingdom there will be struggles and dangersand watchfulness and wrestling prayer will be required of us. And here is our only hope of escape from the perils of the way, as it was with poor Peter

32-34. But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your Brothers. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I tell you, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before you shall thrice deny that you know Me. Though Peter did not really know himself, Christ knew him. That is one of our comfortsthat the Lord Jesus Christ foresees all future ill and so provides against it. He looks down into our nature and deals with us as we need to be dealt with. It is well for us that we are in His hands.

35-40. And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked you anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that has a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that has no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough. And He came out, and went, as He was known, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that you enter not into temptation. Or, into trial. We do not often enough present that petition, Lead us not into temptation. We are not able to bear temptation if it goes beyond a certain pointand it is a greater mercy to escape temptation than it is to pass through it and to overcome it. I mean, of course, only in some respects. We may ask to be delivered from the Evil One if we must be tempted by him, but our first prayer should be that we may not enter into temptation.

41, 42. And He was withdrawn from them about a stones cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done. We can read these words in a calm, quiet tone, but they were uttered by our Lord with an intensity of agony which we can scarcely call up before our minds eyes. So terrible was that agony that our Savior became utterly weak and faint through the intensity of His pleading.

43, 44. And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly. More and more intense was that brief prayer as His supplication was continued.

44. And His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke was a physician, you know, so he was the most likely one to record this phenomenon. It has happenedso we have been told to some other persons in intense fright or agony, that their sweat has been tinged with blood. But we never remember reading or hearing of anyone but our Lord of whom it could be said, His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow. Great sorrow may have quite opposite effects upon different men. You have, perhaps, sometimes noticed that intoxication produces upon some men exactly the opposite effect to that which it produces upon otherssome become irritable and noisy, while others become taciturn and quiet. It is also quite a matter of fact that great sorrow has various effects upon different minds. In the Saviors case, it aroused Him to an awful agony of earnestness in prayer. In the disciples case, it sent them to sleep.

46. And said unto them, Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The great trial for them, as well as for their Lord, was close at hand. It was late at night and they were drowsy and sleepy, yet no time is amiss for supplication. Prayer is never out of season and never unnecessary. We never know when temptation is near, so let us pray without ceasing to Him who is able to preserve us from temptation, or to deliver us out of it.

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THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE   
NO. 1199

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING. OCTOBER 18, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22:44.**

OUR Lord, after having eaten the Passover and celebrated the supper with His disciples, went with them to the Mount of Olives and entered the Garden of Gethsemane. What induced Him to select that place to be the scene of His terrible agony? Why there, in preference to anywhere else would He be arrested by His enemies? May we not conceive that as in a garden Adams self-indulgence ruined us, so in another garden the agonies of the second Adam should restore us? Gethsemane supplies the medicine for the ills which followed upon the forbidden fruit of Eden. No flowers which bloomed upon the banks of the four-fold river were ever so precious to our race as the bitter herbs which grew hard by the black and sullen stream of Kidron.

May not our Lord also have thought of David, when on that memorable occasion he fled out of the city from his rebellions son, and it is written, The king also, himself, passed over the brook Kidron, and he and his people went up barefoot and bareheaded, weeping as they went? Behold, the greater David leaves the Temple to become desolate and forsakes the city which had rejected His admonitions! And with a sorrowful heart He crosses the foul brook to find in solitude a solace for His woes. Our Lord Jesus, moreover, meant us to see that our sin changed everything about Him into sorrowit turned His riches into poverty, His peace into travail, His glory into shameand so the place of His peaceful retirement, where, in hallowed devotion He had been nearest Heaven in communion with God, our sin transformed into the focus of His sorrow, the center of His woe. Where He had enjoyed most, there He must be called to suffer most.

Our Lord may, also, have chosen the Garden because, needing every remembrance that could sustain Him in the conflict, He felt refreshed by the memory of former hours there which had passed away so quietly. He had prayed there and gained strength and comfort. Those gnarled and twisted olives knew Him wellthere was scarcely a blade of grass in the Garden which He had not knelt upon. He had consecrated the spot to fellowship with God! What wonder, then, that He preferred this favored soil? Just as a man would choose, in sickness, to lie in his own bed, so Jesus chose to endure His agony in His own place of prayer where the recollections of former communings with His Father would come vividly before Him.

But, probably, the chief reason for His resort to Gethsemane was that it was His well-known haunt. John tells us, Judas also knew the place. Our Lord did not wish to conceal Himself. He did not need to be hunted down like a thief, or searched out by spies. He went boldly to the place

where His enemies knew that He was accustomed to pray, for He was willing to be taken to suffering and to death. They did not drag Him off to Pilates Hall against His will, but He went with them voluntarily. When the hour was come for Him to be betrayedthere He was, in a place where the traitor could readily find Him. And when Judas would betray Him with a kiss, His cheek was ready to receive the traitorous salutation. The blessed Savior delighted to do the will of the Lord though it involved obedience unto death!

We have thus come to the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane, let us now enterbut first, let us take off our shoes, as Moses did, when he saw the bush which burned with fire and was not consumed. Surely we may say with Jacob, How dreadful is this place! I tremble at the task which lies before me, for how shall my feeble speech describe those agonies for which strong crying and tears were scarcely an adequate expression? I desire, with you, to survey the sufferings of our Redeemer, but oh, may the Spirit of God prevent our mind from thinking anything amiss, or our tongue from speaking even one word which would be derogatory to Him either in His immaculate Manhood or His glorious Godhead!

It is not easy, when you are speaking of one who is both God and Man, to observe the exact line of correct speech. It is easy to describe the Divine side in such a manner as to trench upon the human, or to depict the human at the cost of the Divine. Make me not an offender for a word if I should err! A man had need, himself, to be Inspired, or to confine himself to the very Words of Inspiration to fitly speak, at all times, upon the great mystery of godlinessGod manifest in the fleshand especially when he has to dwell most upon God so manifest in suffering flesh that the weakest traits in manhood become the most conspicuous.

O Lord, open my lips that my tongue may utter right words! Meditating upon the agonizing scene in Gethsemane we are compelled to observe that our Savior endured, there, a grief unknown to any previous period of His life. Therefore we will commence our discourse by raising the question, WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF THE PECULIAR GRIEF OF GETHSEMANE? Our Lord was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief throughout His whole life and yet, though it may sound paradoxical, I scarcely think there existed on the face of the earth a happier man than Jesus of Nazareth! The griefs which He endured were counterbalanced by the peace of purity, the calm of fellowship with God and the joy of benevolence. This last, every good man knows to be very sweetand all the sweeter in proportion to the pain which is voluntarily endured for the carrying out of its kind designs. It is always joy to do good, cost what it may.

Moreover, Jesus dwelt at perfect peace with God at all times. We know that He did so, for He regarded that peace as a choice legacy which He could bequeath to His disciples. Before He died, He said to them, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. He was meek and lowly of heart, and therefore His soul had rest. He was one of the meek who inherit the earth. He was one of the peacemakers who are and must be blessed. I think I am not mistaken when I say that our Lord was far from being an unhappy Man. But in Gethsemane all seems changed, His peace is gone, His calm is turned to tempest.

After supper our Lord had sung a hymn, but there was no singing in Gethsemane. Down the steep bank which led from Jerusalem to the Kidron He talked very cheerfully, saying, I am the Vine and you are the branches, and that wondrous prayer which He prayed with His disciples after that discourse is full of majestyFather, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I amis a very different prayer from that inside Gethsemanes walls, where He cries, If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Notice that all His life you scarcely find Him uttering an expression of grief. But here He says, not only by His sighs and by His bloody sweat, but in so many words, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.

In the Garden the Sufferer could not conceal His grief and does not appear to have wished to do so. Thrice he ran backward and forward to His disciplesHe let them see His sorrow and appealed to them for sympathy. His exclamations were very piteous and His sighs and groans were, I doubt not, very terrible to hear. Chiefly did that sorrow reveal itself in bloody sweat, which is a very unusual phenomenon, although I suppose we must believe those writers who record instances somewhat similar. The old physician, Galen, gives an instance in which, through extremity of horror, an individual poured forth a discolored sweat, so nearly crimson as, at any rate, to appear to have been blood. Other cases are given by medical authorities.

We do not, however, on any previous occasion observe anything like this in our Lords life. It was only in the last grim struggle among the olive trees that our Champion resisted unto blood, agonizing against sin. What ailed You, O Lord, that You should be so sorely troubled just then? We are clear that His deep sorrow and distress were not occasioned by any bodily pain. Our Savior had doubtless been familiar with weakness and pain, for He took our sicknesses, but He never, in any previous instance, complained of physical suffering. Neither at the time when He entered Gethsemane had He been grieved by any bereavement. We know why it is written, Jesus weptit was because His friend Lazarus was deadbut here there was no funeral, nor sick bed, nor particular cause of grief in that direction.

Nor was it the revived remembrance of any past reproaches which had lain dormant in His mind. Long before this reproach had broken His heart, He had known to the full the vexations of contumely and scorn. They had called Him a drunken man and a winebibber. They had charged Him with casting out devils by the Prince of the devilsthey could not say more and yet He had bravely faced it allit could not be possible that He was now sorrowful unto death for such a cause. There must have been a something sharper than pain, more cutting than reproach, more terrible than bereavement, which now, at this time, grappled with the Savior and made Him exceedingly sorrowful, and very heavy.

Do you suppose it was the fear of coming scorn, or the dread of crucifixion? Was it terror at the thought of death? Is not such a supposition impossible? Every man dreads death and as Man, Jesus could not but shrink from it. When we were originally made, we were created for immortality and, therefore, to die is strange and uncongenial work to us. The instincts of self-preservation cause us to start back from it, but surely in our Lords case that natural cause could not have produced such specially painful results. It does not make even such poor cowards as we are sweat great drops of blood! Why, then, should it work such terror in Him?

It is dishonoring to our Lord to imagine Him less brave than His own disciples, yet we have seen some of the most feeble of His saints triumphant in the prospect of departing. Read the stories of the martyrs and you will frequently find them exultant in the near approach of the most cruel sufferings. The joy of the Lord has given such strength to them that no cowardly thought has alarmed them for a single momentthey have gone to the stake, or to the block with songs of victory upon their lips! Our Master must not be thought of as inferior to His boldest servants! It cannot be that He should tremble where they were brave. Oh, no! The noblest spirit among yon band of martyrs is the Leader, Himself, who in suffering and heroism surpassed them all! None could so defy the pangs of death as the Lord Jesus, who, for the joy which was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame!

I cannot conceive that the pangs of Gethsemane were occasioned by any extraordinary attack from Satan. It is possible that Satan was there and that his presence may have darkened the shadebut he was not the most prominent cause of that hour of darkness. This much is quite clear, that our Lord, at the commencement of His ministry, engaged in a very severe duel with the Prince of Darkness, and yet we do not read concerning that temptation in the wilderness a single syllable as to His souls being exceedingly sorrowful. Neither do we find that He was sore amazed and was very heavy. Nor is there a solitary hint at anything approaching to bloody sweat. When the Lord of Angels condescended to stand foot to foot with the Prince of the power of the air, He had no such dread of him as to utter strong cries and tears and fall prostrate on the ground with threefold appeals to the Great Father.

Comparatively speaking, to put His foot on the old serpent was an easy task for Christ and did but cost Him a bruised heel. But this Gethsemane agony wounded His very soul even unto death. What is it then, do you think, that so peculiarly marks Gethsemane and the griefs thereof? We believe that, then, the Father put Him to grief for us. It was then that our Lord had to take a certain cup from the Fathers hand. Not from the Jews, not from the traitor, Judas. Not from the sleeping disciples, nor from the devil came the trial, thenit was a cup filled by One whom He knew to be His Father, but Who, nevertheless, He understood to have appointed Him a very bitter potion, a cup not to be drunk by His body and to spend its gall upon His flesh, but a cup which specially amazed His soul and troubled His inmost heart.

He shrunk from it and, therefore, you can be sure that it was a draught more dreadful than physical pain, since from that He did not shrink. It was a potion more dreadful than reproachfrom

that He had not turned aside. It was more dreadful than Satanic temptationthat He had overcome! It was a something inconceivably terrible and amazingly full of dreadwhich came from the Fathers hand. This removes all doubt as to what it was, for we read, It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin. The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all. He has made Him to be sin for us though He knew no sin.

This, then, is that which caused the Savior such extraordinary depression. He was now about to taste death for every man. He was about to bear the curse which was due to sinners because He stood in the sinners place and must suffer in the sinners stead. Here is the secret of those agonies which it is not possible for me to set forth before you! It is so true that

*Tis to God, and God alone,*

*That His griefs are fully known.*   
Yet would I exhort you to consider these griefs, that you may love the Sufferer. He now realized, perhaps for the first time, that He was to be a SinBearer. As God He was perfectly holy and incapable of sin. And as Man He was without original taintHe was spotlessly pureyet He had to bear sin, to be led forth as the Scapegoat bearing the iniquity of Israel upon His head. He had to be taken and made a Sin Offeringand as a loathsome thing, (for nothing was more loathsome than the sin offering)to be taken outside the camp and utterly consumed with the fire of Divine wrath!

Do you wonder that His infinite purity started back from that? Would He have been what He was if it had not been a very solemn thing for Him to stand before God in the position of a sinner? Yes, and as Luther would have said it, to be looked upon by God as if He were all the sinners in the world, and as if He had committed all the sin that ever had been committed by His peoplefor it was all laid on Him and on Him must the vengeance due for it all be poured. He must be the center of all the vengeance and bear away upon Himself what ought to have fallen upon the guilty sons of men. To stand in such a position, when once it was realized, must have been very terrible to the Redeemers holy soul.

Then, also, the Saviors mind was intently fixed upon the dreadful nature of sin. Sin had always been abhorrent to Him, but now His thoughts were engrossed with it. He saw its worse than deadly nature, its heinous character and horrible aim. Probably at this time, beyond any former period, He had, as Man, a view of the wide range and all-pervading evil of sin and a sense of the blackness of its darknessand the desperateness of its guilt as being a direct attack upon the Truth of God. Yes, and upon the very being of God! He saw, in His own Person, to what lengths sinners would go. He saw how they would sell their Lord, like Judas, and seek to destroy Him as did the Jews. The cruel and ungenerous treatment He had Himself received displayed mans hate of God, and, as He saw it, horror took hold upon Him and His soul was heavy to think that He must bear such an evil and be numbered with such transgressorsto be wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities. But not the wounding nor the bruising distressed Him so much as the sin itself. That utterly overwhelmed His soul.

Then, too, no doubt, the penalty of sin began to be realized by Him in the Gardenfirst the sin which had put Him in the position of a suffering Substitute. Then the penalty which must be borne because He was in that position. I dread, to the last degree, that kind of theology which is so

common, nowadays, which seeks to depreciate and diminish our estimate of the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and Sisters, that was no trifling suffering which made recompense to the Justice of God for the sins of men! I am never afraid of exaggeration when I speak of what my Lord endured. All Hell was distilled into that cup of which our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, was made to drink! It was not eternal suffering, but since He was Divine He could, in a short time, offer unto God a vindication of His Justice which sinners in Hell could not have offered had they been left to suffer in their own persons forever.

The woe that broke over the Saviors spiritthe great and fathomless ocean of inexpressible anguish which dashed over the Saviors soul when He diedis so inconceivable that I must not venture far lest I be accused of a vain attempt to express the unutterable! But this I will saythe very spray from that great tempestuous deepas it fell on Christ, baptized Him in a bloody sweat! He had not yet come to the raging billows of the penalty itself, but even standing on the shore, as He heard the awful surf breaking at His feet, His soul was sorely amazed and very heavy. It was the shadow of the coming tempest. It was the prelude of the dread desertion which He had to endure when He stood where we ought to have stood and paid to His Fathers justice the debt which was due from us! It was this which laid Him low. To be treated as a sinner, to be smitten as a sinner, though in Him was no sinthis it was which caused Him the agony of which our text speaks.

Having thus spoken of the cause of His peculiar grief, I think we shall be able to support our view of the matter while we lead you to consider WHAT WAS THE CHARACTER OF THE GRIEF ITSELF? I shall trouble you, as little as possible, with the Greek words used by the Evangelists. I have studied each of them, to try and find out the shades of their meaning, but it will suffice if I give you the results of my careful investigation. What was the grief itself? How was it described? This great sorrow assailed our Lord some four days before He suffered. If you turn to John 12:27, you find that remarkable utterance, Now is My soul troubled. We never knew Him say that before! This was a foretaste of the great depression of spirit which was so soon to lay Him prostrate in Gethsemane.

Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. After that we read of Him in Matthew 26:37, that, He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. The depression had come over Him again. It was not pain. It was not a palpitation of the heart, or an aching of the brow. It was worse than these. Trouble of spirit is worse than pain of bodypain may bring trouble and be the incidental cause of sorrowbut if the mind is perfectly at peace, how well a man can bear pain! And when the soul is exhilarated and lifted up with inward joy, bodily pain is almost forgotten, the soul conquering the body. On the other hand the souls sorrow will create bodily pain, the lower nature sympathizing with the higher.

Our Lords main suffering lay in His soulHis soul-suffering was the soul of His suffering. A wounded spirit who can bear? Pain of spirit is the worst of pain. Sorrow of heart is the climax of griefs. Let those who have ever known sinking spirits, despondency and mental gloom, attest the truth of what I say! This sorrow of heart appears to have led to a very deep depression of our Lords spirit. In Matthew 26:37, you find it recorded that He was deeply distressed, and that expression is full of meaningof more meaning, indeed, than it would be easy to explain. The word, in the original, is a very difficult one to translate. It may signify the abstraction of the mind and its complete occupation, by sorrow, to the exclusion of every thought which might have alleviated the distress.

One burning thought consumed His whole soul and burned up all that might have yielded comfort. For a while His mind refused to dwell upon the result of His death, the consequent joy which was set before Him. His position as a Sin Bearer and the desertion by His Father which was necessary, engrossed His contemplation and hurried His soul away from all else. Some have seen in the word a measure of distractionand though I will not go far in that directionyet it does seem as if our Saviors mind underwent perturbations and convulsions widely different from His usual calm, collected spirit. He was tossed to and fro as upon a mighty sea of trouble, which was worked to a tempest, and carried Him away in its fury. We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. As the Psalmist said, innumerable evils compassed Him about so that His heart failed Him. His heart was melted with sheer dismay. He was deeply distressed.

Some consider the word to signify at its root, separated from the people, as if He had become unlike other men, even as one whose mind is staggered by a sudden blow or pressed with some astounding calamity, is no more as ordinary men are. Mere onlookers would have thought our Lord to be a man distraught, burdened beyond the possibility of men, and borne down by a sorrow unparalleled among men. The learned Thomas Goodwin says, The word denotes a failing, deficiency and sinking of spirit such as happens to men in sickness and wounding. Epaphroditus sickness, whereby he was brought near to death, is called by the same word, so that we see that Christs soul was sick and faintwas not His sweat produced by exhaustion? The cold, clammy sweat of dying men comes through faintness of body. But the bloody sweat of Jesus came from an utter faintness and prostration of soul. He was in an awful soul-swoon and suffered an inward death whose accompaniment was not watery tears from the eyes, but a weeping of blood from the entire man.

Many of you, however, know in your measure what it is to be deeply distressed without my multiplying words. And if you do not know, by personal experience, all explanations I could give would be in vain. When deep despondency comes on. When you forget everything that would sustain you and your spirit sinks down, down, downthen can you sympathize with our Lord. Others think you foolish, call you nervous and bid you rally yourself, but they know not your case. If they understood it, they would not mock you with such admonitions. Our Lord was deeply distressed, very sinking, very despondent, overwhelmed with grief.

Mark tells us, next, in his 14th chapter and 33rd verse that our Lord was sore amazed. The Greek word does not merely import that He was astonished and surprised, but that His amazement went to an extremity of horror, such as men fall into when their hair stands on end and their flesh trembles. As the delivery of the Law made Moses exceedingly fear and

quake, and as David said, My flesh trembles because of Your judgments, so our Lord was stricken with horror at the sight of the sin which was laid upon Him and the vengeance which was due on account of it. The Savior was first distressed, then depressed, heavy, and lastly, sore amazed and filled with amazementfor even He, as a Man, could scarcely have known what it was that He had undertaken to bear.

He had looked at it calmly and quietly and felt that whatever it was He would bear it for our sake. But when it actually came to the bearing of sin He was utterly astonished and taken aback at the dreadful position of standing in the sinners place before Godof having His holy Father look upon Him as the sinners Representative, and of being forsaken by that Father with whom He had lived on terms of amity and delight from old eternity. It staggered His holy, tender, loving Natureand He was sore amazed and was very heavy. We are further taught that there surrounded, encompassed and overwhelmed Him an ocean of sorrow, for the 38th verse of the 26th of Matthew contains the word perilupos, which signifies an encompassing around with sorrows.

In all ordinary miseries there is, generally, some loophole of escape, some breathing place for hope. We can generally remind our friends in trouble that their case might be worse. But in our Lords griefs, worse could not be imagined, for He could say with David, The pains of Hell get hold upon Me. All Gods waves and billows went over Him. Above Him, beneath and around Him, outside Him, and withinallall was anguish and neither was there one alleviation or source of consolation. His disciples could not help Himthey were all, but one, sleepingand he who was awake was on the road to betray Him. His spirit cried out in the Presence of the Almighty God beneath the crushing burden and unbearable load of His miseries! No griefs could have gone further than Christs and He, Himself, said, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, or surrounded with sorrow even unto death.

He did not die in the Garden, but He suffered as much as if He had died. He endured death intensively, though not extensively. It did not extend to the making His body a corpse, but it went as far in pain as if it had been so. His pangs and anguish went up to the mortal agony and only paused on the verge of death. Luke, to crown all, tells us in our text, that our Lord was in an agony. The expression, agony, signifies a conflict, a contest, a wrestling. With whom was the agony? With whom did He wrestle? I believe it was with Himself. The contest here intended was not with His Godnonot as I will but as You will, does not look like wrestling with God. It was not a contest with Satan, for, as we have already seen, He would not have been so sorely amazed had that been the conflict. It was a terrible combat within Himself, an agony within His own soul.

Remember that He could have escaped from all this grief with one resolve of His will and, naturally, the Manhood in Him said, Do not bear it! And the purity of His heart said, Oh, do not bear it, do not stand in the place of the sinner. The delicate sensitiveness of His mysterious Nature shrunk altogether from any form of connection with sinyet infinite Love said, Bear it, stoop beneath the load. And so there was agony between the attributes of His Naturea battle on an awful scale in the arena of His soul. The purity which cannot bear to come into contact with sin must have been very mighty in Christwhile the love which would not let His people perish was very mighty, too. It was a struggle on a titanic scale, as if a Hercules had met another Herculestwo tremendous forces strove and fought and agonized within the bleeding heart of Jesus.

Nothing causes a man more torture than to be dragged here and there with contending emotions. As civil war is the worst and most cruel kind of war, so a war within a mans soul, when two great passions in him struggle for the mastery, and both noble passions, too, causes a trouble and distress which none but he that feels it can understand. I marvel not that our Lords sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, when such an inward pressure made Him like a cluster trod in the winepress! I hope I have not presumptuously looked into the Ark, or gazed within the veiled Holy of Holies. God forbid that curiosity or pride should urge me to intrude where the Lord has set a barrier. I have brought you as far as I can and must again drop the curtain with the words I used just now

*Tis to God, and God alone,   
That His griefs are fully known.*

Our third question shall be, WHAT WAS OUR LORDS SOLACE IN ALL THIS? He sought help in human companionship and it was very natural that He should do so. God has created in our human nature a craving for sympathy. We do not err when we expect our Brethren to watch with us in our hour of trial. But our Lord did not find that men were able to assist Himhowever willing their spirit might be, their flesh was weak. What, then, did He do? He resorted to prayer and especially prayer to God under the Character of Father. I have learned by experience that we never know the sweetness of the Fatherhood of God so much as when we are in very bitter anguish. I can understand why the Savior said, Abba, Fatherit was anguish that brought Him down as a chastened child to appeal plaintively to a Fathers love.

In the bitterness of my soul I have cried, If, indeed, You are my Father, by the heart of Your Fatherhood have pity on Your child. And here Jesus pleads with His Father as we have done. And He finds comfort in that pleading. Prayer was the channel of the Redeemers comfortearnest, intense, reverent, repeated prayerand after each time of prayer He seems to have grown quiet and to have gone to His disciples with a measure of restored peace of mind. The sight of their sleeping helped to bring back His griefs and, therefore, He returned to pray again. And each time He was comforted, so that when He had prayed for the third time, He was prepared to meet Judas and the soldiers and to go with silent patience to judgment and to death. His great comfort was prayer and submission to the Divine will, for when He had laid His own will down at His Fathers feet, the feebleness of His flesh spoke no more complaininglybut in sweet silence, like a sheep dumb before her shearersHe contained His soul in patience and rest.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, if any of you shall have your Gethsemane and your heavy griefs, imitate your Master by resorting to prayer, by crying to your Father and by learning submission to His will. I shall conclude by drawing two or three inferences from the whole subject. May the Holy

Spirit instruct us.   
The first is thisLearn, dear Brothers and Sisters, the real Humanity of   
our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not think of Him merely as God, though He is  
assuredly Divine, but feel Him to be near of kin to you, bone of your bone,   
flesh of your flesh. How thoroughly can He sympathize with you! He has   
been burdened with all your burdens and grieved with all your griefs. Are   
the waters very deep through which you are passing? They are not deep   
compared with the torrents with which He was buffeted! Never a pang   
penetrates your spirit to which your Covenant Head was a stranger. Jesus   
can sympathize with you in all your sorrows, for He has suffered far more   
than you have ever suffered! He is able, therefore, to succor you in your  
temptations. Lay hold on Jesus as your familiar Friend, your Brother born   
for adversity, and you will have obtained a consolation which will bear you   
through the uttermost deeps.   
Next, see here the intolerable evil of sin. You are a sinner, which Jesus   
never wasyet even to stand in the sinners place was so dreadful to Him   
that He was sorrowful even unto death, What will sin one day be to you if  
you should be found guilty at the last? Oh, could we understand the horror of sin, there is not one among us that would be satisfied to remain in   
sin for a single moment! I believe there would go up from this House of  
Prayer this morning a weeping and a wailing such as might be heard in   
the very streets, if men and women here who are living in sin could really  
know what sin is, and what the wrath of God is that rests upon them  
and what the judgments of God will be that will shortly surround them   
and destroy them!   
Oh Soul, sin must be an awful thing if it so crushed our Lord! If the   
very imputation of it fetched bloody sweat from the pure and holy Savior,  
what must sin, itself, be? Avoid it, pass not by it, turn away from the very   
appearance of it, walk humbly and carefully with your God that sin may   
not harm you, for it is an exceeding plague, an infinite pest!   
Learn next, but oh, how few minutes have I in which to speak of such a   
lesson, the matchless love of Jesus, that for your sakes and mine He   
would not merely suffer in body, but consented even to bear the horror of   
being accounted a sinner! Coming under the wrath of God because of our  
sinsthough it cost Him suffering unto death and sore amazementyet   
rather than that we should perish, the Lord stood as our Surety! Can we  
not cheerfully endure persecution for His sake? Can we not labor earnestly for Him? Are we so ungenerous that His cause shall suffer lack   
while we have the means of helping it? Are we so base that His work shall  
flag while we have strength to carry it on? I charge you by Gethsemane,   
my Brothers and Sisters, if you have a part and lot in the passion of your  
Savior, love Him much who loved you so immeasurably! Spend and be   
spent for Him!   
Again, looking at Jesus in the Garden, we learn the excellence and  
completeness of the Atonement. How black I am, how filthy, how loathsome in the sight of GodI feel myself only fit to be cast into the lowest

Hell and I wonder that God has not long ago cast me there! But I go into  
Gethsemane, I peer under those gnarled olive trees and I see my Savior! Yes, I see Him wallowing on the ground in anguish and hear such groans come from Him as never came from human lips before! I look upon the earth and see it red with His blood, while His face is smeared with gory   
sweat. And I say to myself, My God, my Savior, what ails You? I hear Him reply, I am suffering for your sins. And then I take comfort, for while I gladly would have spared my Lord such an anguish, now   
that the anguish is over I can understand how Jehovah can spare me, because He smote His Son in my place! Now I have hope of justification, for I   
bring before the justice of God and my own conscience the remembrance   
of my bleeding Savior, and I say, Can You twice demand payment, first at  
the hand of Your agonizing Son and then, again, at mine? Sinner as I am,  
I stand before the burning Throne of the severity of God and am not afraid   
of it! Can You scorch me, O consuming Fire, when You have not only  
scorched but utterly consumed my Substitute?   
No, by faith my soul sees Justice satisfied, the Law honored, the moral   
government of God established and yet my once guilty soul absolved and   
set free! The fire of avenging Justice has spent itself and the Law has exhausted its most rigorous demands upon the Person of Him who was  
made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in   
Him! Oh the sweetness of the comfort which flows from the atoning blood!   
Obtain that comfort, my Brethren, and never leave it! Cling to your Lords   
bleeding heart and drink in abundant consolation!  
Last of all, what must be the terror of the punishment which will fall  
upon those men who reject the atoning blood and who will have to stand   
before God in their own proper persons to suffer for their sins? I will tell   
you, Sirs, with pain in my heart as I tell you, what will happen to those of  
you who reject my Lord! Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master, is a sign and   
prophecy to you of what will happen to you. Not in a garden, but on that   
bed of yours where you have so often been refreshedyou will be surprised and overtakenand the pains of death will get hold upon you. With   
an exceedingly sorrow and remorse for your misspent life and for a rejected Savior you will be made very miserable. Then will your darling sin,   
your favorite lust, like another Judas, betray you with a kiss! While yet  
your soul lingers on your lips you will be seized and taken off by a body of   
evil ones and carried away to the bar of God, just as Jesus was taken to  
the judgment seat of Caiaphas.   
There shall be a speedy, personal, and somewhat private judgment by   
which you shall be committed to prison where, in darkness, weeping and   
wailing, you shall spend the night before the great assize of the Judgment   
Morning. Then shall the day break and the resurrection morning come,   
and as our Lord then appeared before Pilate, so will you appear before the   
highest tribunal, not that of Pilate, but the dread judgment seat of the Son  
of God whom you have despised and rejected! Then will witnesses come   
against you, not false witnesses, but trueand you will stand speechless,   
even as Jesus said not a word before His accusers. Then will Conscience   
and Despair buffet you! You will become such a monument of misery,   
such a spectacle of contempt as to be fitly noted by another Ecce Homo,   
and men shall look at you and say, Behold the man and the suffering which has come upon him, because he despised his God and found   
pleasure in sin.   
Then you shall be condemned. Depart, you cursed, shall be your sentence, even as, Let Him be crucified was the doom of Jesus. You shall be   
taken away by the officers of Justice to your doom. Then, like the sinners   
Substitute, you will cry, I thirst, but not a drop of water shall be given   
you! You shall taste nothing but the gall of bitterness. You shall be executed publicly with your crimes written over your head that all may read   
and understand that you are justly condemned. And then will you be   
mocked as Jesus was, especially if you have been a professor of religion  
and a false one! All that pass by will say, He saved others, he preached to   
others, but himself he cannot save. God Himself will mock you! No, think   
not that I dream! Has He not said itI, also, will laugh at your calamity. I   
will mock when your fear comes? Cry unto your gods that you once   
trusted in! Get comfort out of the lusts you once delighted in, O you that  
are cast away forever! To your shame and to the confusion of your nakedness, you shall, that have despised the Savior, be made a spectacle of the   
justice of God forever.   
It is right it should be so. Justice rightly demands it. Sin made the Savior suffer an agonyshall it not make you suffer? Moreover, in addition to   
your sin, you have rejected the Savior. You have said, He shall not be my  
trust and confidence. Voluntarily, presumptuously and against your own  
conscience you have refused eternal life! And if you die rejecting mercy  
what can come of it but that first, your sin, and secondly, your unbelief   
shall condemn you to misery without limit or end? Let Gethsemane warn   
you! Let its groans, tears and bloody sweat admonish you! Repent of sin   
and believe in Jesus! May His Spirit enable you, for Jesus sake. Amen.

*PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Mark 14:32-42, and Psalm 40.*   
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GETHSEMANE   
NO. 493

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 8, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22:44.**

FEW had fellowship with the sorrows of Gethsemane. The majority of the disciples were not there. They were not sufficiently advanced in Divine Grace to be admitted to behold the mysteries of the agony. Occupied with the Passover feast at their own houses, they represent the many who live upon the letter, but are mere babes and sucklings as to the spirit of the Gospel. The walls of Gethsemane fitly typify that weakness in Grace which effectually shuts in the deeper marvels of communion from the gaze of ordinary Believers. To twelve, no, to eleven, only was the privilege given to enter Gethsemane, and see this great sight.

Out of the eleven, eight were left at some distance. They had fellowship, but not of that intimate sort to which the men greatly beloved are admitted. Only three highly favored ones, who had been with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and had witnessed the life-giving miracle in the house of Jairusonly these three could approach the veil of His mysterious sorrowwithin that veil even these must not intrude. A stones throw distance must be left between. He must tread the winepress alone, and of the people there must be none with Him.

Peter and the two sons of Zebedee represent the few eminent, experienced, Grace-taught saints who may be written down as Fathers. These having done business on great waters, can in some degree, measure the huge Atlantic waves of their Redeemers passion. Having been much alone with Him, they can read His heart far better than those who merely see Him amid the crowd. To some selected spirits it is given, for the good of others, and to strengthen them for some future, special and tremendous conflictto enter the inner circleand hear the pleadings of the suffering High Priest. They have fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and are made conformable unto His death.

Yet, I say, even these, the elect out of the electthese choice and peculiar favorites among the kings courtierseven these cannot penetrate the secret places of the Saviors woe, so as to comprehend all His agonies. Your unknown sufferings, is the remarkable expression of the Greek liturgyfor there is an inner chamber in His grief, shut out from human knowledge and fellowship. Was it not here that Christ was more than ever an, unspeakable gift to us? Is not Watts right when he sings

*And all the unknown joys He gives, Were bought with agonies unknown?*

Since it would not be possible for any Believer, however experienced, to know for himself all that our Lord endured in the place of the olive press, when He was crushed beneath the upper and the nether millstone of mental suffering and hellish malice, it is clearly far beyond the preachers capacity to set it forth to you. Jesus Himself must give you access to the wonders of Gethsemaneas for me, I can but invite you to enter the garden, bidding you take your shoes off, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground. I am neither Peter, nor James, nor John, but one who would wish, like they, to drink of the Masters cup and be baptized with His Baptism.

I have up to now advanced only so far as yonder band of eight, but there I have listened to the deep groanings of the Man of Sorrows. Some of you, my venerable Friends, may have learned far more than I. But you will not refuse to hear again the roaring of the many waters which strive to quench the love of the Great Husband of our souls. Several matters will require our brief consideration. Come Holy Spirit, breathe light into our thoughts, life into our words.

I. Come here and behold the SAVIORS UNUTTERABLE WOE. The emotions of that dolorous night are expressed by several words in Scripture. John describes Him as saying four days before His passion, Now is My soul troubled. As He marked the gathering clouds He hardly knew where to turn Himself, and cried out, What shall I say? Matthew writes of Him, He began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Upon the word ademonein translated very heavy, Goodwin remarks that there was a distraction in the Saviors agony since the root of the word signifies, separated from the peoplemen in distraction, being separated from mankind.

What a thought, my Brothers and Sisters, that our blessed Lord should be driven to the very verge of distraction by the intensity of His anguish. Matthew represents the Savior Himself as saying, My soul is

exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Here the word perilupos means encompassed, encircled, overwhelmed with grief. He was plunged head and ears in sorrow, and had no breathing hole, is the strong expression of Goodwin. Sin leaves no cranny for comfort to enter, and therefore the Sin Bearer must be entirely immersed in woe. Clark records that He began to be sorely amazed and to be very heavy in this case thambeisthai, with the prefix ek, shows extremity of amazement like that of Moses when he did exceedingly fear and quake.

O blessed Savior, how can we bear to think of You as a Man astonished and alarmed! Yet was it even so when the terrors of God set themselves in array against You. Luke uses the strong language of my text being in an agony. These expressions, each of them worthy to be the theme of a discourse, are quite sufficient to show that the grief of the Savior was of the most extraordinary characterwell justifying the prophetic exclamation, Behold, and see if there are any sorrows like unto My sorrow which was done unto Me. He stands before us peerless in misery. None are molested by the powers of evil as He wasas if the powers of Hell had given commandment to their legions, Fight neither with small nor great, but only with the King, Himself.

Should we profess to understand all the sources of our Lords agony, wisdom would rebuke us with the question, Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in search of the depths? We cannot do more than look at the revealed causes of grief. It partly arose from the horror of His soul when fully comprehending the meaning of sin. Brethren, when you were first convicted of sin, and saw it as a thing exceedingly sinful, though your perception of its sinfulness was but faint compared with its real heinousness, yet horror took hold upon you.

Do you remember those sleepless nights? Like the Psalmist, you said, My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long, for day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Some of us can remember when our souls chose strangling rather than lifewhen if the shadows of death could have covered us from the wrath of God, we would have been too glad to sleep in the grave that we might not make our bed in Hell. Our blessed Lord saw sin in its natural blackness. He had a most distinct perception of its treasonable assault upon His God, its murderous hatred to Himself and its destructive influence upon mankind. Well might horror take hold upon Him, for a sight of sin must be far more hideous than a sight of Hell, which is but its offspring.

Another deep fountain of grief was found in the fact that Christ now assumed more fully His official position with regard to sin. He was now made sin. Hear the word! He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him! In that night the words of Isaiah were fulfilledThe Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Now He stood as the Sin Bearer, the Substitute accepted by Divine justice to bearthat we might never bearthe whole of Divine wrath.

At that hour Heaven looked on Him as standing in the sinners place, and treated as sinful man had richly deserved to be treated. Oh, dear Friends, when the immaculate Lamb of God found Himself in the place of the guilty, when He could not repudiate that place because He had voluntarily accepted it in order to save His chosen, what must His soul have felt? How must His perfect Nature have been shocked at such close association with iniquity!

We believe that at this time, our Lord had a very clear view of all the shame and suffering of His crucifixion. The agony was but one of the first drops of the tremendous shower which discharged itself upon His head. He foresaw the speedy coming of the traitor, Judasthe seizure by the officers, the mock trials before the Sanhedrimand Pilate, and Herod. He foresaw the scourging and buffeting, the crown of thorns, the shame, the spitting. All these rose up before His mind and, as it is a general law of our nature that the foresight of trial is more grievous than the trial itself, we can conceive how it was that He who answered not a word when in the midst of the conflict, could not restrain Himself from strong crying and tears in the prospect of it.

Beloved Friends, if you can imagine before your minds eye the terrible incidents of His deaththe hounding through the streets of Jerusalem, the nailing to the Cross, the fever, the thirst and, above all, the forsaking of His Godyou cannot marvel that He began to be very heavy and was sore amazed.

But possibly a yet more fruitful tree of bitterness was this that now His Father began to withdraw His Presence from Him. The shadow of that great eclipse began to fall upon His spirit when He knelt in that cold midnight amidst the olives of Gethsemane. The sensible comforts which had cheered His spirit were taken away. That blessed application of promises which Christ Jesus needed as a man was removed. All that we understand by the term, consolations of God, were hidden from His eyes. He was left single-handed in His weakness to contend for the deliverance of man. The Lord stood by as if He were an indifferent spectator, or rather, as if He were an adversaryHe wounded Himwith the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one.

But in our judgment the fiercest heat of the Saviors suffering in the garden lay in the temptations of Satan. That hour above any time in His life, even beyond the forty days conflict in the wilderness, was the time of His temptation. This is your hour and the power of darkness. Now could he emphatically say, The prince of this world comes. This was His last hand-to-hand fight with all the hosts of Hell, and here must He sweat great drops of blood before the victory can be achieved.

We have glanced at the fountains of the great deep which were broken up when the floods of grief deluged the Redeemers soul. Brethren, this one lesson before we pass from the contemplation. We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need. Let us reflect that no suffering can be unknown to Him.

We do but run with footmenHe had to contend with horsemen. We do but wade up to our ankles in shallow streams of sorrowHe had to buffet with the swellings of Jordan. He will never fail to succor His people when tempted. Even as it was said of old, In all their affliction He was afflicted. And the Angel of His Presence saved them.

II. W e turn next to contemplate THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD. At the outset of His career, the serpent began to nibble at the heel of the promised Deliverer. And now as the time approached when the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpents head, that old dragon made a desperate attempt upon his great Destroyer. It is not possible for us to lift the veil where Revelation has permitted it to fall, but we can form some faint idea of the suggestions with which Satan tempted our Lord.

Let us, however, remark by way of caution, before we attempt to paint this picture, that whatever Satan may have suggested to our Lord, His perfect Nature did not in any degree whatever submit to it so as to sin. The temptations were, doubtless, of the very foulest character, but they left no speck or flaw upon Him, who remained still the fairest among ten thousand. The prince of this world came, but he had nothing in Christ. He struck the sparks, but they did not fall, as in our case, upon dry tinder. They fell as into the sea and were quenched at once. He hurled the fiery arrows, but they could not even scar the flesh of Christ. They smote upon the buckler of His perfectly righteous Nature and they fell off with their points broken, to the discomfiture of the adversary.

But what do you think were these temptations? It strikes me, from some hints given, that they were somewhat as followsthere was, first, a temptation to leave the work unfinished. We may gather this from the prayerIf it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Son of God, Satan said, is it so? Are You really called to bear the sin of man? Has God said, I have laid help upon One that is mighty, and are You He, the chosen of God, to bear all this load? Look at Your weakness! You sweat, even now, great drops of blood! Surely You are not He whom the Father has ordained to be mighty to saveor if You arewhat will You win by it?

What will it avail You? You have glory enough already. See what miscreants they are for whom You are to offer up Yourself a Sacrifice? Your best friends are asleep about You when most You need their comfort. Your treasurer, Judas, is hastening to betray You for the price of a common slave. The world for which You sacrifice Yourself will cast out Your name as evil and Your Church, for which You do pay the ransom price, what is it worth? A company of mortals! Your Divinity could create the like any moment it pleases You! Why do You need, then, to pour out Your soul unto death?

Such arguments would Satan use. The hellish craft of one who had then been thousands of years tempting men, would know how to invent all manner of mischief. He would pour the hottest coals of Hell upon the Savior. It was in struggling with this temptation, among others, that, being in an agony, our Savior prayed more earnestly.

Scripture implies that our Lord was assailed by the fear that His strength would not be sufficient. He was heard in that He feared. How, then, was He heard? An angel was sent unto Him strengthening Him. His fear, then, was probably produced by a sense of weakness. I imagine that the foul Fiend would whisper in His earYou! You endure to be smitten of God and abhorred of men! Reproach has broken Your heart already how will You bear to be publicly put to shame and driven without the city as an unclean thing? How will You bear to see Your weeping kinsfolk, and Your broken-hearted mother standing at the foot of Your Cross? Your tender and sensitive spirit will quail under it.

As for Your Body, it is already emaciated. Your long fasts have brought You very low. You will become a prey to death long before Your work is done. You will surely fail. God has forsaken You. Now will they persecute and take You. They will give up Your soul to the lion, and Your darling to the power of the dog. Then would he picture all the sufferings of crucifixion and say, Can Your heart endure, or can Your hands be strong in the day when the Lord shall deal with You? The temptation of Satan was not directed against the Godhead, but the Manhood of Christ, and therefore the fiend would probably dwell upon the feebleness of man.

Did You not say Yourself, I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the despised of the people? How will You bear it when the wrath-clouds of God gather about You? The tempest will surely shipwreck all Your hopes. It cannot be! You cannot drink of this cup, nor be baptized with this Baptism. In this manner, we think, was our Master tried. But see, He yields not to it. Being in an agony, which word means in a wrestling ring, He struggles with the tempter like Jacob with the angel. No, says He, I will not be subdued by taunts of My weakness. I am strong in the strength of My Godhead, I will overcome you yet. Yet was the temptation so awful, that, in order to master it, His mental depression caused Him to, sweat as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Possibly, also, the temptation may have arisen from a suggestion that He was utterly forsaken. I do not knowthere may be sterner trials than this, but surely this is one of the worst, to be utterly forsaken. See, said Satan, as he hissed it out between his teethsee, You have a friend nowhere! Look up to Heaven, Your Father has shut up the heart of His compassion against You. Not an angel in Your Fathers courts will stretch out his hand to help You. Look yonder, not one of those spirits, who honored Your birth, will interfere to protect Your life. All Heaven is false to You. You are left alone. And as for earth, do not all men thirst for Your blood?

Will not the Jew be gratified to see Your flesh torn with nails? And will not the Roman gloat himself when You, the King of the Jews, are fastened to the Cross? You have no friend among the nations. The high and mighty scoff at You, and the poor thrust out their tongues in derision. You had no where to lay Your head when You were in Your best estate. You have no place, now, where shelter will be given You. See the companions with whom You have taken sweet counsel, what are they worth? Son of Mary, see there Your brother James, see there Your beloved disciple John, and your bold Apostle Peter?They sleep, they sleep!

And yonder eight, how the cowards sleep when You are in Your sufferings! And where are the four hundred others? They have forgotten You. They will be at their farms and their merchandize by morning. Lo! You have no friend left in Heaven or earth. All Hell is against You. I have stirred up my infernal den. I have sent my missives throughout all regions summoning every prince of darkness to set upon You this night, and we will spare no arrows! We will use all our infernal might to overwhelm You. And what will You do, You solitary One?

It may be this was the temptation. I think it was, because the appearance of an angel unto Him, strengthening Him, removed that fear. He was heard in that He feared. He was no more alone, but Heaven was with Him. It may be that this is the reason of His coming three times to His disciplesas Hart puts it

*Backwards and forwards thrice He ran*

*As if He sought some help from man.*   
He would see for Himself whether it was really true that all men had forsaken Him. He found them all asleep, but perhaps He gained some faint comfort from the thought that they were sleeping, not from treachery, but from sorrow, the spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak.

We think Satan also assaulted our Lord with a bitter taunt, indeed. You know in what guise the tempter can dress it, and how bitterly sarcastic he can make the insinuationAh, You will not be able to achieve the redemption of Your people. Your grand benevolence will prove a mockery, and Your beloved ones will perish. You shall not prevail to save them from my grasp. Your scattered sheep shall surely be my prey. Son of David, I am a match for You! You cannot deliver out of my hand. Many of Your chosen have entered Heaven on the strength of Your atonement, but I will drag them from there and quench the stars of glory!

I will thin the courts of Heaven of the choristers of God, for You will not fulfill Your Suretyship. You cannot do it. You are not able to bring up all this great peoplethey will perish yet. See, are not the sheep scattered now that the Shepherd is smitten? They will all forget You. You will never see of the travail of Your soul. Your desired end will never be reached. You will be forever the man that began to build but was not able to finish. Perhaps this is more truly the reason why Christ went three times to look at His disciples.

You have seen a mother. She is very faint, weary with a heavy sickness, but she labors under a sore dread that her child will die. She has started from her couch, upon which disease had thrown her, to snatch a moments rest. She gazes anxiously upon her child. She marks the faintest sign of recovery. But she is so sick herself she cannot remain more than an instant from her own bed. She cannot sleep, she tosses painfully, for her thoughts wander. She rises to gaze againHow are you, my Child, how are you? Are those palpitations of your heart less violent? Is your pulse more gentle? But, alas, she is faint, and she must go to her bed again, yet she can get no rest. She will return again and again to watch the loved one.

So, methinks, Christ looked upon Peter and James and John, as much as to say, No, they are not all lost yet. There are three left, and, looking upon them as the type of all the Church, He seemed to sayNo, no. I will overcome. I will get the mastery. I will struggle even unto blood. I will pay the ransom price, and deliver My Darlings from their foe.

Now these, methinks, were His temptations. If you can form a fuller idea of what they were than this, then right happy shall I be. With this one lesson I leave the pointPray that you enter not into temptation. This is Christs own expressionHis own deduction from His trial. You have all read, dear Friends, John Bunyans picture of Christian fighting with Apollyon. That master painter has sketched it to the very life. He says, though, this sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent. 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 look upward! But it was the most dreadful sight I ever saw.

That is the meaning of that prayer, Lead us not into temptation. Oh you that go recklessly where you are tempted, you that pray for afflictionsand I have known some silly enough to do that! You that put yourselves where you tempt the devil to tempt you, take heed from the Masters own example. He sweat great drops of blood when He was tempted. Oh, pray God to spare you such trial! Pray this morning, and every day, Lead me not into temptation.

III. Behold, dear Brothers and Sisters, THE BLOODY SWEAT. We read, that, He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. For this reason, a few writers have supposed that the sweat was not actually blood, but had the appearance of it. That interpretation, however, has been rejected by most commentators, from Augustine downward, and it is generally held that the words, as it were, do not only set forth likeness to blood, but signify that it was actually and literally blood. We find the same idiom used in the textWe beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.

Now, clearly, this does not mean that Christ was like the only-begotten of the Father, since He is really so. So that generally this expression of Holy Scripture sets forth, not a mere likeness to a thing, but the very thing itself. We believe, then, that Christ did really sweat blood. This phenomenon, though somewhat unusual, has been witnessed in other persons. There are several cases on record, some in the old medicine books of Galen, and others of more recent date, of persons who after long weakness, under fear of death, have sweat blood.

But this case is altogether one by itself for several reasons. If you will notice, He not only sweat blood, but it was in great drops. The blood coagulated and formed large masses. I cannot better express what is meant than by the word, clotsbig, heavy drops. This has not been seen in many cases. Some slight effusions of blood have been known in cases of persons who were previously enfeebled, but great drops, never. When it is said, falling to the groundit shows their copiousness, so that they not only stood upon the surface and were sucked up by His garments till He became like the red heifer which was slaughtered on that very spot, but the drops fell to the ground.

Here He stands unrivalled. He was a man in good health, only about thirty years of age, and was laboring under no fear of death, but the mental pressure arising from His struggle with temptation. And the straining of all His strength, in order to baffle the temptation of Satan, so forced His frame to an unnatural excitement, that His pores sent forth great drops of blood which fell to the ground. This proves how tremendous must have been the weight of sin when it was able so to crush the Savior that He distilled drops of blood!

This proves too, my Brothers and Sisters, the mighty power of His love. It is a very pretty observation of old Isaac Ambrose that the gum which exudes from the tree without cutting is always the best. This precious camphire tree yielded most sweet spices when it was wounded under the knotty whips, and when it was pierced by the nails on the Cross. But see, it gives forth its best spice when there is no whip, no nail, no wound. This sets forth the voluntariness of Christs sufferings, since, without a lance, the blood flowed freely.

No need to put on the leech, or apply the knifeit flows spontaneously. No need for the rulers to cry, Spring up, O well. Of itself it flows in crimson torrents. Dearly beloved Friends, if men suffer some frightful pain of mindI am not acquainted with the medical matterapparently the blood rushes to the heart. The cheeks are pale, a fainting fit comes on. The blood has gone inward, as if to nourish the inner man while passing through its trial. But look at our Savior in His agonyHe is so utterly oblivious of Self, that instead of His agony driving His blood to the heart to nourish Himself, it drives it outward to bedew the earth. The agony of Christ, inasmuch as it pours Him out upon the ground, pictures the fullness of the offering which He made for men.

Do you not perceive, my Brothers and Sisters, how intense must have been the wrestling through which He passed and will you not hear His voice to you?You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. It has been the lot of some of us to have sore temptationselse we did not know how to teach othersso sore that in wrestling against them, the cold, clammy sweat has stood upon our brow. The place will never be forgotten by mea lonely spotwhere, musing upon my God, an awful rush of blasphemy went over my soul, till I would have preferred death to the trial.

I fell on my knees then and there, for the agony was awful, while my hand was at my mouth to keep the blasphemies from being spoken. Once let Satan be permitted really to try you with a temptation to blasphemy, and you will never forget it, though you live till your hairs are blanched. Or let him attack you with some lust, and though you hate and loathe the very thought of it, and would lose your right arm sooner than indulge in it, yet it will come and hunt and persecute and torment you. Wrestle against it even unto sweat, my Brothers and Sisters, yes, even unto blood.

None of you should say, I could not help it, I was tempted. Resist till you sweat blood rather than sin. Do not say, I was so pressed with it. And it so suited my natural temperament, that I could not help falling into it. Look at the great Apostle and High Priest of your profession, and sweat even to blood rather than yield to the great tempter of your souls. Pray that you enter not into temptation, so that when you enter into it you may with confidence say, Lord, I did not seek this, therefore help me through with it, for Your names sake.

IV. I want you, in the fourth place, to notice THE SAVIORS PRAYER. Dear Friends, when we are tempted and desire to overcome, the best weapon is prayer. When you cannot use the sword, and the shield, take to yourself the famous weapon of All-Prayer. So did your Savior. Let us notice His prayer. It was a lonely prayer. He withdrew even from His three best friends about a stones throw. Believer, especially in temptation, be much in solitary prayer. As private prayer is the key to open Heaven, so is it the key to shut the gates of Hell. As it is a shield to prevent, so is it the sword with which to fight against temptation.

Family prayer, social prayer, prayer in the Church will not suffice. These are very precious, but the best beaten spice will smoke in your censer in your private devotions, where no ear hears but God. Betake yourselves to solitude, if you would overcome. Mark, too, it was humble prayer. Luke says He knelt, but another Evangelist says He fell on His face. What? Does the King fall on His face? Where, then, must be your place, you humble servant of the great Master? Does the Prince fall flat to the ground? Where, then, will you lie? What dust and ashes shall cover your head? What sackcloth shall gird your loins? Humility gives us good foothold in prayer. There is no hope of any real prevalence with God, who casts down the proud, unless we abase ourselves that He may exalt us in due time.

Further, it was filial prayer. Matthew describes Him as saying, O My Father. Mark puts it, Abba, Father. You will find this always a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. Hence that prayer, in which it is written, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, begins with, Our Father which are in Heaven. Plead as a child. You have no rights as a subject. You have forfeited them by your treason, but nothing can forfeit a childs right to a fathers protection. Be not, then, ashamed to say, My Father, hear my cry. Again, observe that it was persevering prayer. He prayed three times, using the same words. Be not content until you prevail. Be as the importunate widow, whose continued coming earned what her first supplication could not win. Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Further, see how it glowed to a red-hot heat it was earnest prayer. He prayed more earnestly. What groans were those which were uttered by Christ! What tears, which welled up from the deep fountains of His Nature! Make earnest supplication if you would prevail against the adversary. And last, it was the prayer of resignation. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will. Yield and God yields. Let it be as God wills, and God will will it that it shall be for your best. Be perfectly content to leave the result of your prayer in His hands, who knows when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold. So pleading earnestly, importunately, yet mingling with it humility and resignation, you shall prevail.

Dear Friends, we must concludeturn to the last point with this as a practical lessonRise and pray. When the disciples were lying down, they slept. Sitting was the posture that was congenial to sleep. Rise! Shake yourselves! Stand up in the name of God! Rise and pray. And if you are tempted, be more in prayer than ever you were in your life instant, passionate, importunate with God that He would deliver you in the day of your conflict.

V. As time has failed us we close with the last point, which is, THE SAVIORS PREVALENCE.   
The cloud has passed away. Christ has knelt and the prayer is over. But, says one, did Christ prevail in prayer? Beloved, could we have any hope that He would prevail in Heaven if He had not prevailed on earth? Should we not have had a suspicion that if His strong crying and tears had not been heard then, He would fail now? His prayers did speed, and therefore He is a good Intercessor for us. How was He heard? The answer shall be given very briefly, indeed.   
He was heard, I think, in three respects. The first gracious answer that was given Him was, that His mind was suddenly rendered calm. What a difference there is between, My soul is exceeding sorrowfulHis hurrying too and fro, His repetition of the prayer three times, the singular agitation that was upon Himwhat a contrast between all these, and His going forth to meet the traitor with, Betray you the Son of Man with a kiss? Like a troubled sea before, and now as calm as when He, Himself said, Peace, be still, and the waves were quiet.   
You cannot know a more profound peace than that which reigned in the Savior when before Pilate He answered Him not a word. He is calm to the last, as calm as though it were His day of triumph rather than His day of trouble. Now I think this was vouchsafed to Him in answer to His prayer. He had sufferings perhaps more intense, but His mind was now quieted so as to meet them with greater deliberation.   
Like some men, who when they first hear the firing of the shots in a battle are all trepidation, but as the fight grows hotter, and they are in greater danger, they are cool and collected. They are wounded, they are bleeding, they are dyingyet are they quiet as a summers eve. The first young flush of trouble is gone, and they can meet the foe with peaceso the Father heard the Saviors cry, and breathed such a profound peace into His soul, that it was like a river, and His righteousness like the waves of the sea.   
Next, we believe that He was answered by God strengthening Him through an angel. How that was done we do not know. Probably it was by what the angel said, and equally likely is it that it was by what he did. The angel may have whispered the promisespictured before His minds eye the glory of His successsketched His resurrection, portrayed the scene when His angels would bring His chariots from on High to bear Him to His Throne. The angel may have revived before Him the recollection of the time of His advent, the prospect when He should reign from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. And so have made him strong.   
Or, perhaps, by some unknown method God sent such power to our Christ, who had been like Samson with his locks shorn, that He suddenly received all the might and majestic energy that were needed for the terrific struggle. Then He walked out of the garden no more a worm, and no man, but made strong with an invisible might that made Him a match for all the armies that were round about Him. A troop had overcome Him, like Gad of old, but He overcame at last. Now He can dash through a troop! Now He can leap over a wall. God has sent, by His angel, force from on high, and made the Man Christ strong for battle and for victory.   
And I think we may conclude with saying that God heard Him in granting Him now, not simply strength, but a real victory over Satan. I do not know whether what Adam Clarke supposes is correct, that in the garden Christ did pay more of the price than He did even on the Cross. But I am quite convinced that they are very foolish who get to such refinement that they think the Atonement was made on the Cross and nowhere else at all. We believe that it was made in the garden as well as on the Cross. And it strikes me that in the garden one part of Christs work was finished, wholly finished, and that was His conflict with Satan.   
I conceive that Christ had now rather to bear the absence of His Fathers Presence, and the reviling of the people, and the sons of men, than the temptations of the devil. I do think that these were over when He rose from His knees in prayer, when He lifted Himself from the ground where He marked His visage in the clay in drops of blood. The temptation of Satan was then over, and He might have said, concerning that part of the workIt is finished, broken is the dragons headI have overcome him.

Perhaps in those few hours that Christ spent in the garden, the whole energy of the agents of iniquity was concentrated and dissipated. Perhaps in that one conflict, all that craft could invent, all that malice could devise, all that infernal practice could suggest, was tried on Christthe devil having his chain loosened for that purpose, having Christ given up to him, as Job was, that he might touch Him in His bones and in His flesh. Yes, touch Him in His heart, and His souland vex Him in His spirit. It may be that every devil in Hell, and every Fiend of the pit was summoned, each to vent his own spite and to pour their united energy and malice upon the head of Christ.   
And there He stood and He could have said, as He stood up to meet the next adversarya devil in the form of manJudasI come this day from Bozrah, with garments dyed red from Edom. I have trampled on My enemies and overcome them once and for all. Now I go to bear mans sin, and my Fathers wrath, and to finish the work which He has given Me to do. If this is so, Christ was then heard, in that He fearedHe feared the temptation of Satanand He was delivered from it. He feared His own weakness, and He was strengthened. He feared His own trepidation of mind, and He was made calm.   
What shall we say, then, in conclusion, but this lesson. Does it not say, Whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall have? Then if your temptations reach the most tremendous height and force, still lay hold of God in prayer, and you shall prevail. Convicted Sinner! That is a comfort for you. Troubled Saint! That is a joy for you. To one and all of us is this lesson of this morningPray that you enter not into temptation. If in temptation let us ask that Christ may pray for us that our faith fail not. And when we have passed through the trouble, let us try to strengthen our Brothers and Sisters, even as Christ has, by His Grace, strengthened us this day. Amen.

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THE BETRAYAL   
NO. 494

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 15, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And while He yet spoke, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus   
said unto him, Judas, betray you the   
Son of Man with a kiss?   
Luke 22:47, 48.**

WHEN Satan had been entirely worsted in his conflict with Christ in the garden, the man-devil Judas came upon the scene. As the Parthian in his flight turns round to shoot the fatal arrow, so the archenemy aimed another shaft at the Redeemer by employing the traitor into whom he had entered. Judas became the devils deputy, and a most trusty and serviceable tool he was. The Evil One had taken entire possession of the apostates heart and, like the swine possessed of devils, he ran violently downwards towards destruction.

Well had infernal malice selected the Saviors trusted friend to be His treacherous betrayer, for thus he stabbed at the very center of His broken and bleeding heart. But, Beloved, as in all things, God is wiser than Satan, and the Lord of Goodness outwitted the Prince of Evil. In this dastardly betrayal of Christ, prophecy was fulfilled, and Christ was the more surely declared to be the promised Messiah. Was not Joseph a type? And, lo, like that envied youth, Jesus was sold by His own brothers and sisters.

Was He not to be another Samson, by whose strength the gates of Hell should be torn from their posts? Lo, as Samson, He is bound by His countrymen and delivered to the adversary. Know you not that He was the antitype of David? And was not David deserted by Ahithophel, his own familiar friend and counselor? Brothers and Sisters, do not the words of the Psalmist receive a literal fulfillment in our Masters betrayal? What prophecy can be more exactly true than the language of the forty-first and fifty-fifth Psalms?

In the first we read, Yes, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. And in the fifty-fifth the Psalmist is yet more clear. 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: but it was you, a man my equal, my guide and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the House of God in company.

He has put forth his hands against such as are at peace with him: he has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords. Even an obscure passage in one of the lesser Prophets must have a literal fulfillment, and for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a base slave, must the Savior be betrayed by His choice friend. Ah, you foul Fiend, you shall find at the last, that your wisdom is but intensified folly!

As for the deep plots and plans of your craft, the Lord shall laugh them to scorn. After all, you are but the unconscious drudge of Him whom you abhor in all the black work you do so greedily, you are no better than a mean scullion in the royal kitchen of the King of kings.

Without further preface, let us advance to the subject of our Lords betrayal. First, concentrate your thoughts upon Jesus, the Betrayed One. And when you have lingered awhile there, solemnly gaze into the villainous countenance of Judas, the betrayerhe may prove a beacon to warn us against the sin which genders apostasy.

I. LET US TARRY AWHILE, AND SEE OUR LORD UNGRATEFULLY AND DASTARDLY BETRAYED.   
It is appointed that He must die, but how shall He fall into the hands of His adversaries? Shall they capture Him in conflict? It must not be, lest He appear an unwilling victim. Shall He flee before His foes until He can hide no longer? It is not meet that a sacrifice should be hunted to death. Shall He offer Himself to the foe? That were to excuse His murderers, or be a party to their crime. Shall He be taken accidentally or unawares? That would withdraw from His cup the necessary bitterness which made it wormwood mingled with gall.   
NoHe must be betrayed by His friend, that He may bear the utmost depths of suffering, and that in every separate circumstance there may be a well of grief. One reason for the appointment of the betrayal lay in the fact that it was ordained that mans sin should reach its culminating point in His death. God, the great Owner of the vineyard, had sent many servants, and the farmers had stoned one, and cast out another. Last of all, He said, I will send My Son. Surely they will reverence My Son.   
When they slew the heir to win the inheritance, their rebellion had reached its height. The murder of our blessed Lord was the extreme of human guiltit developed the deadly hatred against God which lurks in the heart of man. When man became a deicide, sin had reached its fullness. And in the black deed of the man by whom the Lord was betrayed, that fullness was all displayed. If it had not been for a Judas, we had not known how black, how foul our human nature may become. I scorn the men who try to apologize for the treachery of this devil in human form, this son of perdition, this foul apostate.   
I should think myself a villain if I tried to screen him, and I shudder for the men who dare extenuate his crimes. My Brothers and Sisters, we should feel a deep detestation of this master of infamy. He has gone to his own place, and the anathema of David, part of which was quoted by Peter, has come upon him, When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few. And let another take his office.   
Surely, as the devil was allowed unusually to torment the bodies of men, even so was he let loose to get possession of Judas as he has seldom gained possession of any other manthat we might see how foul, how desperately evil is the human heart. Beyond a doubt, however, the main reason for this was that Christ might offer a perfect atonement for sin. We may usually read the sin in the punishment. Man betrayed his God. Man had the custody of the royal garden, and should have kept its green avenues sacred for communion with his God.  
But he betrayed the trust. The sentinel was false. He admitted evil into his own heart, and so into the Paradise of God. He was false to the good name of the Creator, tolerating the insinuation which he should have repelled with scorn. Therefore must Jesus find man a traitor to Him. There must be the counterpart of the sin in the suffering which He endured. You and I have often betrayed Christ. We have, when tempted, chosen the evil and forsaken the good. We have taken the bribes of Hell, and have not followed closely with Jesus.  
It seemed most fitting, then, that He who bore the chastisement of sin should be reminded of its ingratitude and treachery by the things which He suffered. Besides, Brothers and Sisters, that cup must be bitter to the last degree which is to be the equivalent for the wrath of God. There must be nothing consolatory in it. Pains must be taken to pour into it all that even Divine wisdom can invent of awful and unheard of woe, and this one pointHe that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me, was absolutely necessary to intensify the bitterness.   
Moreover, we feel persuaded that by thus suffering at the hand of a traitor, the Lord became a faithful High Priest, able to sympathize with us when we fall under the like affliction. Since slander and ingratitude are common calamities, we can come to Jesus with full assurance of faith. He knows these sore temptations, for He has felt them in their very worst degree. We may cast every care and every sorrow upon Him, for He cares for us, having suffered with us. Thus, in our Lords betrayal, Scripture was fulfilled, sin was developed, atonement was completed, and the great allsuffering High Priest became able to sympathize with us in every point.

Now let us look at the treason itself. You perceive how black it was. Judas was Christs servant. What if I call him His confidential servant? He was a partaker in Apostolic ministry and in the honor of miraculous gifts. He had been most kindly and indulgently treated. He was a sharer in all the goods of his Masterin fact he fared far better than his Lordfor the Man of Sorrows always took the lions share of all the pains of poverty and the reproach of slander. He had food and raiment given him out of the common stock and the Master seems to have indulged him very greatly.   
The old tradition is, that next to the Apostle Peter, he was the one with whom the Savior most commonly associated. We think there must be a mistake there, for surely John was the Saviors greatest friend. But Judas, as a servant, had been treated with the utmost confidence. You know, Brothers and Sisters, how sore is that blow which comes from a servant in whom we have put unlimited trust. But Judas was more than thishe was a friend, a trusted friend.

That little bag into which generous women cast their small contributions had been put into his hands, and very wisely, too, for he had the financial vein. His main virtue was economy, a very needful quality in a treasurer. As exercising a prudent foresight for the little company, and watching the expenses carefully, he was, as far as men could judge, the right man in the right place. He had been thoroughly trusted. I read not that there was any annual audit of his accounts. I do not discover that the Master took him to task as to the expenditure of his privy purse.

Everything was given to him, and he gave, at the Masters direction, to the poor, but no account was asked. This is vile, indeed, to be chosen to such a position, to be installed purse-bearer to the King of kings, chancellor of Gods exchequer, and then to turn aside and sell the Savior! This is treason in its uttermost degree! Remember that the world looked upon Judas as colleague and partner with our Lord. To a great extent, the name of Judas was associated with that of Christ. When Peter, James, or John had done anything amiss, reproachful tongues threw it all on their Master.

The twelve were part and parcel of Jesus of Nazareth. One old commentator says of JudasHe was Christs alter egoto the people at large there was an identification of each Apostle with the Leader of the band. And oh, when such associations have been established, and then there is treachery, it is as though our arm should commit treason against our head, or as if our foot should desert the body. This was a stab, indeed! Perhaps, dear Brothers and Sisters, our Lord saw in the person of Judas a representative man, the portraiture of the many thousands who in after ages imitated his crime.

Did Jesus see in Iscariot all the Judases who betray truth, virtue and the Cross? Did He perceive the multitudes of whom we may say that they were, spiritually, in the loins of Judas? Hymenaeus, Alexander, Hermogenes, Philetus, Demas, and others of that tribe, were all before Him as He saw the manHis equal, His acquaintancebartering Him away for thirty pieces of silver.

Dear Friends, the position of Judas must have tended greatly to aggravate his treason. Even the heathens have taught us that ingratitude is the worst of vices. When Caesar was stabbed by his friend Brutus, the worlds poet writes

*This was the most unkindest cut of all;   
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,   
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors arms, Quite vanquished him. Then burst his mighty heart; And, in his mantle muffling up his face,   
Even at the base of Pompeys statue   
Great Caesar fell.*

Many ancient stories, both Greek and Roman, we might quote to show the abhorrence which the heathens entertain towards ingratitude and treachery. Certain, also, of their own poets, such, for instance, as Sophocles, have poured out burning words upon deceitful friends. But we have no time to prove what you will all admit, that nothing can be more cruel, nothing more full of anguish, than to be sold to destruction by ones bosom friend. The closer the enemy comes, the deeper will be the stab he gives. If we admit him to our heart, and give him our close intimacy, then can he wound us in the most vital part.

Let us notice, dear Friends, while we look at the breaking heart of our agonizing Savior, the manner in which He met this affliction. He had been much in prayerprayer had overcome His dreadful agitationHe was very calm. And we need to be very calm when we are forsaken by a friend. Observe His gentleness. The first words He spoke to Judas, when the traitor had polluted His cheek with a kiss, was thisFRIEND! FRIEND!! Note that! Not, You hateful miscreant, but Friend, why are you come? not, Wretch, why do you dare to stain My cheek with your foul and lying lips? No, Friend, why are you come?

Ah, if there had been anything good left in Judas, this would have brought it out. If he had not been an unmitigated, incorrigible, thrice-dyed traitor, his avarice must have lost its power at that instant and he would have criedMy Master! I came to betray You, but that generous word has won my soul. Here, if You must be bound, I will be bound with You. I make a full confession of my infamy! Our Lord added these wordsthere is reproof in them, but notice how kind they are, still, how much too good for such a despicable cowardJudas, betray you the Son of Man with a kiss?

I can conceive that the tears gushed from His eyes, and that His voice faltered, when He thus addressed His own familiar friend and acquaintanceBetray you, My Judas, My treasurer, betray you the Son of Man, your suffering, sorrowing Friend, whom you have seen naked and poor, and without a place whereon to lay His head? Betray you the Son of Man and do you prostitute the fondest of all endearing signsa kissthat which should be a symbol of loyalty to the King, shall it be the badge of your treacherythat which was reserved for affection as her best symboldo you make it the instrument of My destruction? Betray you the Son of Man with a kiss?

Oh, if he had not been given up to hardness of heart, if the Holy Spirit had not utterly left him, surely this son of perdition would have fallen prostrate, yet again, and weeping out his very soul, would have cried No, I cannot betray You, You suffering Son of Man! Forgive, forgive me! Spare Yourself, escape from this bloodthirsty crew and pardon Your treacherous disciple! But no, no word of compunction, while the silver is at stake! Afterwards came the sorrow that works death, which drove him, like Ahithophel, his prototype, to court the gallows to escape remorse.

This, also, must have aggravated the woe of our beloved Lord, when He saw the final impenitence of the traitor, and read the tearful doom of that man of whom He had once said, it would be better for him that he had never been born.

Beloved, I would have you fix your eyes on your Lord in your quiet meditations as being thus despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And gird up the loins of your minds, counting it no strange thing if this fiery trial should come upon you. But be determined that though your Lord should be betrayed by His most eminent disciples, yet, through His Divine Grace you will cling to Him in

shame, and in suffering, and will follow Him, if needs be, even unto death.

God give us Grace to see the vision of His nailed hands and feet! And remembering that all this came from the treachery of a friend, let us be very jealous of ourselves, lest we crucify the Lord afreshand put Him to an open shame by betraying Him in our conduct, or in our words, or in our thoughts.

II. Grant me your attention while we make an estimate of the man by whom the Son of man was betrayedJUDAS THE BETRAYER. I would call your attention, dear Friends, to his position and public character. Judas was a preacherno, he was a foremost preacher. He obtained part of this ministry, said the Apostle Peter. He was not simply one of the seventy. He had been selected by the Lord, Himself, as one of the Twelve, an honorable member of the college of the Apostles.

Doubtless he had preached the Gospel so that many had been gladdened by his voice and miraculous powers had been vouchsafed to him so that at his word the sick had been healed, deaf ears had been opened, and the blind had been made to see. There is no doubt that he who could not keep the devil out of himself, had cast devils out of others. Yet how are you fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! He that was as a Prophet in the midst of the people, and spoke with the tongue of the learned, whose word and wonders proved that he had been with Jesus, and had learned of Himhe betrays his Master.

Understand, my Brothers and Sisters, that no gifts can guarantee Divine Grace, and that no position of honor or usefulness in the Church will necessarily prove our being true to our Lord and Master. Doubtless there are bishops in Hell, and crowds of those who once occupied the pulpit are now condemned forever to bewail their hypocrisy. You that are Church officers, do not conclude that because you enjoy the confidence of the Church, that therefore, of an absolute certainty, the Grace of God is in you. Perhaps it is the most dangerous of all positions for a man to become well known and much respected by the religious world, and yet to be rotten at the core.

To be where others can observe our faults is a healthy thing, though painful. But to live with beloved friends who would not believe it possible for us to do wrong, and who, if they saw us err, would make excuses for usthis is to be where it is next to impossible for us ever to be aroused if our hearts are not right with God. To have a fair reputation and a false heart is to stand upon the brink of Hell.

Judas took a very high degree officially. He had the distinguished honor of being entrusted with the Masters financial concerns, and this, after all, was no small degree to which to attain. The Lord, who knows how to use all sorts of gifts, perceived what gift the man had. He knew that Peters unthinking impetuosity would soon empty the bag, and leave the company in great straits. And if He had entrusted it to John, his loving spirit might have been cajoled into unwise benevolence towards beggars of unctuous tongue.

John might even have spent the little moneys in buying alabaster boxes whose precious ointments should anoint the Masters head. He gave the bag to Judas, and it was discreetly, prudently and properly used. There is no doubt he was the most judicious person, and fitted to occupy the post.

But oh, dear Friends, if the Master shall choose any of us who are ministers or Church officers, and give us a very distinguished position. If our place in the ranks shall be that of commanding officers, so that even our Brother ministers look up with esteem, and our fellow elders or deacons regard us as being fathers in Israeloh, if we turn, if we prove falsehow damnable shall be our end at the last! What a blow shall we give to the heart of the Church, and what derision will be made in Hell!

You will observe that the character of Judas was openly an admirable one. I find not that he committed himself in any way. Not the slightest speck defiled his moral character so far as others could perceive. He was no boaster, like Peter. He was free enough from the rashness which cries, Though all men should forsake You, yet will I not. He asks no place on the right hand of the Thronehis ambition is of another sort. He does not ask idle questions. The Judas who asks questions is, not Iscariot. Thomas and Philip are often prying into deep matters, but not Judas.

He receives the Truth of God as it is taught him, and when others are offended, and walk no more with Jesus, he faithfully adheres to Him, having golden reasons for so doing. He does not indulge in the lusts of the flesh or in the pride of life. None of the disciples suspected him of hypocrisy. They said at the table, Lord, is it I? They never said, Lord, is it Judas? It was true he had been filching for months, but then he did it by small amounts, and covered his defalcations so well by financial manipulations that he ran no risk of detection from the honest, unsuspecting fishermen with whom he associated.

Like some merchants and traders we have heard ofinvaluable gentlemen as chairmen of speculating companies and general managers of swindling bankshe could abstract a decent percentage and yet make the accounts exactly tally. The gentlemen who have learned of Judas manage to cook the accounts most admirably for the shareholders, so as to get a rich roast for their own table, over which they, no doubt, entreat the Divine blessing. Judas was, in his known life, a most admirable person. He would have been an alderman before long, there is no doubt, and being very pious and richly gifted, his advent at Churches or Chapels would have created intense satisfaction.

What a discreet and influential person, say the deacons. Yes, replies the minister, what an acquisition to our councils. If we could elect him to office, he would be of eminent service to the Church. I believe that the Father chose him as Apostle on purpose that we might not be at all surprised if we find such a man a minister in the pulpit, or a colleague of the minister, working as an officer in Christs Church. These are solemn things, my Brothers and Sisters. Let us take them to heart, and if any of us wear a good character among men and stand high in office, let this question come home close to usLord, is it I? Lord, is it I? Perhaps he who shall last ask the question is just the man who ought to have asked

it first.

But, secondly, I call your attention to his real nature and sin. Judas was a man with a conscience. He could not afford to do without it. He was no Sadducee who could fling religion overboard. He had strong religious tendencies. He was no debauched person. He never spent a two-pence in vice on his life, not that he loved vice less, but that he loved the two-pence more. Occasionally he was generous, but then it was with other peoples money. Well did he watch his lovely charge, the bag. He had a conscience, I say, and a ferocious conscience it was, when it once broke the chain, for it was his conscience which made him hang himself.

But then it was a conscience that did not sit regularly on the throneit reigned by fits and starts. Conscience was not the leading element. Avarice predominated over conscience. He would get money, if honestlyhe liked that best. But if he could not get it conscientiously, then anyhow in the world. He was but a small traderhis gains were no great things, or else he would not have sold Christ for so small a sum as thatten pounds at the outside, of our money, at its present valuesome three or four pounds, as it were, in those days. It was a poor price to take for the Master. But then, a little money was a great thing to him.

He had been poor. He had joined Christ with the idea that he would soon be proclaimed King of the Jews, and that then he should become a nobleman and be rich. Finding Christ a long while in coming to his kingdom, he had taken little by little, enough to lay by in store. And now, fearing that he was to be disappointed in all his dreams, and never having had any care for Christ, but only for himself, he gets out of what he thinks to have been a gross mistake in the best way he can, and makes money by his treason against his Lord.

Brethren, I do solemnly believe that of all hypocrites, these are the persons of whom there is the least hopewhose god is their money. You may reclaim a drunkardthank Godwe have seen many instances of that. And even a fallen Christian, who has given way to vice, may loathe his lust and return from it. But I fear that the cases in which a man who is cankered with covetousness has ever been saved are so few that they might be written on your fingernail. This is a sin which the world does not rebuke. The most faithful minister can scarce smite its forehead.

God knows what thunders I have launched out against men who are all for this world and yet pretend to be Christs followers. They always say, It is not for me. What I should call stark naked covetousness, they call prudence, discretion, economy, and so on. And actions which I would scorn to spit upon, they will do, and think their hands quite clean after they have done them. And they still sit as Gods people sit, and hear as Gods people hear, and think that after they have sold Christ for paltry gain, they will go to Heaven.

O Souls, Souls, Souls, beware, beware, beware, most of all of greed! It is not money, nor the lack of money, but the love of money which is the root of all evil. It is not getting itit is not even keeping itit is loving it. It is making it your God. It is looking at that as the main chance, and not considering the cause of Christ, nor the Truth of Christ, nor the holy life of Christbut being ready to sacrifice everything for gains sake. Oh, such men make giants in sin. They shall be set up forever as butts for infernal laughter. Their damnation shall be sure and just.

The third point is, the warning which Judas received and the way in which he persevered. Just thinkthe night before he sold his Master what do you think the Master did? Why, He washed his feet! And yet he sold Him! Such condescension! Such love! Such familiarity! He took a towel and girded Himself and washed Judass feet! And yet those very feet brought Judas as a guide to them that took Jesus! And you remember what He said when He had washed his feetNow you are clean, but not all. And He turned a tearful eye on Judas.

What a warning for him! What could be more explicit? Then, when the Supper came and they began to eat and drink together, the Lord said One of you shall betray Me. That was plain enough. And a little farther on He said explicitlyHe that dips with Me in the dish, the same is he. What opportunities for repentance! He cannot say he had not a faithful Preacher. What could have been more personal? If he does not repent now, what is to be done?

Moreover, Judas saw that which was enough to make a heart of adamant bleedhe saw Christ with agony on His face, for it was just after Christ had said, Now is my soul troubled, that Judas left the feast, and went out to sell his Master. That face, so full of grief, ought to have turned him, must have turned him, if he had not been given up and left aloneto deliver over his soul unto his own devices. What language could have been more thundering than the words of Jesus Christ, when He said, Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born?

He had said, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil. Now, if while these thunders rolled over his head, and the lightning flashes pointed at his person, if, then, this man was not aroused, what a Hell of infernal pertinacity and guilt must have been within his soul! Oh, but if any of you, if any of you shall sell Christ for the sake of keeping the shop open on Sunday. If you shall sell Christ for the extra wages you may earn for falsehood. Oh, if you shall sell Christ for the sake of the hundred pounds that you may lay hold of by a villainous contractif you do that, you do not perish unwarned!

I come into this pulpit to please no man among you. God knows if I knew more of your follies you should have them pointed out yet more plainly! If I knew more of the tricks of business, I would not flinch to speak of them! But, O Sirs, I do entreat you by the blood of Judas, who hanged himself at last, turnif such there areturn from this evil, if by chance your sin may be blotted out!

Let us for one minute notice the act itself. He sought out his own temptation. He did not wait for the devil to come to himhe went after the devil. He went to the chief priests, and said, What will you give me? One of the old Puritan Divines says, This is not the way people generally tradethey tell their own price. Judas says, What will you give me? Anything you like. The Lord of Life and Glory sold at the buyers own price.

What will you give me? And another very prettily puts it, What could they give him? What did the man want? He did not want food and raiment. He fared as well as his Master and the other disciples. He had enough. He had all that his needs could crave, and yet he said, What will you give me? What will you give me? What will you give me?

Alas, some peoples religion is grounded on that one questionWhat will you give me? Yes, they would go to Church if there are any charities given away therebut if there were more to be had by not goingthey would do that. What will you give me? Some of these people are not even so wise as Judas. Ah, there is a man over yonder who would sell the Lord for a crown, much more for ten pounds, as Judas did! Why, there are some who will sell Christ for the smallest piece of silver in our currency. They are tempted to deny their Lord, tempted to act in an unhallowed way, though the gains are so paltry that a years worth of them would not come to much.

No subject could be more dreadful than this, if we really would but look at it carefully. This temptation happens to each of us. Do not deny it. We all like to gain. It is but natural that we should. The propensity to acquire is in every mind, and under lawful restrictions it is not an improper propensity. But when it comes into conflict with our allegiance to our Master, and in a world like this it often will, we must overcome it, or perish! There will arise occasions with some of you many times in a week in which it is Godor gain. Christ, or the thirty pieces of silver.

Therefore I am the more urgent in pressing this on you. Do not, though the world should bid its highest, though it should heap its comforts one upon another, and add fame, and honor, and respectdo not, I pray you, forsake your Master. There have been such casescases of persons who used to come here, but they found they did not get onbecause Sunday was the best days trade in the week. They had some good feelings, some good impressions once, but they have lost them now. We have known others who have said, Well, you see, I did once think I loved the Lord, but my business went so badly when I came up to the House of God, that I left itI renounced my profession.

Ah, Judas! Ah, Judas! Ah, Judas! Let me call you by your name, for such you are! This is the sin of the apostate all over again! God help you to repent of it and go, not to any priest, but to Christ, and make confession, if by chance you may be saved. You perceive that in the act of selling Christ, Judas was faithful to his master. Faithful to his master? you say. Yes, his master was the devil, and having made an agreement with him, he carried it out honestly. Some people are always very honest with the devil. If they say they will do a wrong thing, they say they ought to do it because they said they would. As if any oath could be binding on a man if it is an oath to do wrong!

I will never go into that house again, some have said and they have said afterwards, Well, I wish I had not said it. Was it a wrong thing? What is your oath then? It was an oath given to the devil. What was that foolish promise, but a promise to Satanand will you be faithful to him? Ah, would God that you were faithful to Christ! Would that any of us were as true to Christ as Satans servants are to their master!

Judas betrayed his Master with a kiss. That is how most apostates do itit is always with a kiss. Did you ever read an infidel book in your life which did not begin with profound respect for truth? I never have. Even modern ones, when bishops write them, always begin like that. They betray the Son of Man with a kiss. Did you ever read a book of bitter controversy which did not begin with such a sickly lot of humility, such sugar, such butter, such syrup, such everything sweet and soft, that you said, Ah, there is sure to be something bad here, for when people begin so softly and sweetly, so humbly and so smoothly, depend upon itthey have rank hatred in their hearts. The most devout-looking people are often the most hypocritical in the world.

We conclude with the repentance of Judas. He did repent. He did repent, but it was the repentance that works death. He did make a confession, but there was no respect to the deed itselfonly to its consequences. He was very sorry that Christ was condemned. Some latent love that he had once had to a kind Master, came up when he saw that He was condemned. He did not think, perhaps, it would come to that. He may have had a hope that He would escape out of their hands. And then he would keep his thirty pieces of silver and perhaps sell Him over again.

Perhaps he thought that Jesus would rid Himself from their hands by some miraculous display of power, or would proclaim the kingdom. And so He, Himself, would only be hastening on that very blessed consummation. Friends, the man who repents of consequences does NOT repent. The ruffian repents of the gallows, but not of the murderand that is no repentance at all. Human law, of course, must measure sin by consequences, but Gods law does not. There is a point man on a railway who neglects his duty. There is a collision on the line and people are killed. Well, it is manslaughter of this man through his carelessness.

But that point man, perhaps, many times before had neglected his duty, and no accident came of it. Then he walked home and said, Well, I have done no wrong. Now the wrong, mark you, is never to be measured by the accident, but by the thing itself. If you have committed an offense, and you have escaped undetected, it is just as vile in Gods eyes. If you have done wrong, and Providence has prevented the natural result of the wrong, the honor of that is with Godyou are as guilty as if your sin had been carried out to its fullest consequences, and the whole world set ablaze. Never measure sin by consequences, but repent of them as they are in themselves.

Though being sorry for consequences, since these are unalterable, this man was led to remorse. He sought a tree, adjusted the rope, and hanged himself. But in his haste he hanged himself so badly that the rope broke, he fell over a precipice, and there we read his insides gushed out. He lay a mangled mass at the bottom of the cliff, the horror of everyone who passed. Now you that make a gain of godlinessif there are such here you may not come to a suicides end, but take the lesson home.

Mr. Keach, my venerable predecessor, gives at the end of one of his volumes of sermons, the death of a Mr. John Child. John Child had been a Dissenting minister and for the sake of gain, to get a living, he joined the Episcopalians against his conscience. He sprinkled infants, and practiced all the other paraphernalia of the Church against his conscience. At last, at last, he was arrested with such terrors for having done what he had, that he renounced his living. He finally took to a sick bed, and his dying oaths, blasphemies, and curses were something so dreadful, that his case was the wonder of that age.

Mr. Keach wrote a full account of it, and many went to try what they could do to comfort the man, but he would say, Get out of here! Get out of here! It is of no use! I have sold Christ. You remember, also, the wonderful death of Francis Spira. In all literature, there is nothing so awful as the death of Spira. The man had known the Truth of Godhe stood well among reformers. He was an honored, and to a certain extent, apparently a faithful man. But he went back to the Church of Rome! He apostatized. And then when conscience was aroused he did not fly to Christ, but he looked at the consequences instead of at the sin. And so, feeling that the consequences could not be altered, he forget that the sin might be pardoned, and perished in extreme agonies.

May it never be the unhappy lot of any of us to lay in such a deathbed, but the Lord have mercy upon us now, and make us search our hearts. Those of you who say, We do not want that sermon, are probably the persons who need it most. He who shall say, Well, we have no Judas among us, is probably a Judas himself. Oh, search yourselves! Turn out every crannylook in every corner of your soul to see whether your religion is for Christs sake and for Truths sake, and for Gods sakeor whether it is a profession which you take up because it is a respectable thing. Make sure it is not a profession which you keep up because it keeps you up. The Lord search us and try us and bring us to know our ways.

And now, in conclusionthere is a Savior, and that Savior is willing to receive us now. If I am not a saint, I am a sinner. Would it not be best for all of us to go again to the Fountain and wash and be clean? Let each of us go anew and say, Master, You know what I am. I know not myself. But, if I am wrong, make me right. If I am right, keep me so. My trust is in You. Keep me now, for Your own sake, Jesus. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2034 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PETERS RESTORATION   
NO. 2034

**DELIVERED ON LORDS DAY MORNING, JULY 22, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And immediately, while he yet spoke, the cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crowed, you shall deny Me thrice.**

**And Peter went out and wept bitterly.   
Luke 22:60-62.**

PETER had fallen terribly. He had denied his Master, denied Him repeatedly, denied Him with oaths, denied Him in His Presence, while His Master was being smitten and falsely charged. He denied Him, though he was an Apostle. Denied him, though he had declared that should all men forsake Him, yet he never would. It was a sad, sad sin. Remember what led up to it. It was, first, Peters presumption and self-confidence. He reckoned that he could never stumble and for that very reason he speedily fell. A haughty spirit goes before a fall. Oh, that we might look to the roots of bitter flowers and destroy them!

If presumption is flourishing in the soil of our hearts today we shall soon see the evil fruit which will come of it. Reliance upon our firmness of character, depth of experience, clearness of insight, or maturity in grace will, in the end, land us in disgraceful failure. We must either deny ourselves, or we shall deny our Lord. If we cleave to self-confidence, we shall not cleave to Him.

Immediately, Peters denial was owing to cowardice. The brave Peter in the presence of a maid was ashamed. He could not bear to be pointed out as a follower of the Galilean. He did not know what might follow upon it but he saw his Lord without a friend and felt that it was a lost cause and he did not care to avow it. Only to think that Peter, under temporary discouragement, should play the coward! Yet cowardice treads upon the heels of boastinghe that thinks he can fight the world will be the first man to run away.

His sin also arose from his want of watchfulness. His Master had said to him, What, could you not watch with Me one hour? And no doubt there was more meaning in the words than appeared on the surface. The Lord several times said to him, Pray, that you enter not into temptation. The words were repeated with deep impressiveness, for they were greatly needed. But Peter had not watchedhe had been warming his hands. He did not prayhe felt too strong in himself to be driven to special prayer. Therefore, when the gusts of temptation came, they found Peters boat unprepared for the storm and they drove it upon a rock.

When Peter first denied his Master a cock crowed. Peter must have heard that crowing or he would not have communicated the fact to the Evangelists who recorded it. But though he heard it, he was an example of those who have ears but hear not. One would have thought that the

warning would have touched his conscience. But it did not. And when the cock crowed a second time, after he had committed three denials, it might not have awakened him from his dreadful sleep if a higher instrumentality had not been used, namely, a look from the Lord Jesus.

God keep us free from this spirit of slumber, for it is to the last degree dangerous! Peter was under the direful influence of Satan, for it was a night wherein the powers of darkness were specially active. This is your hour, said Jesus, and the power of darkness. That same influence which assailed the Savior unsuccessfullyfor, said He, the prince of this world comes and has nothing in Meassailed Peter with sad result. For the Evil One had something in Peter and he soon found it out. The sparks from Satans flint and steel fell upon our Lord as upon water. But Peters heart was like a tinder-box. And when the sparks fell, they found fuel there. Oh, that we may be kept from the assaults of Satan!

Lead us not into temptation is a necessary prayer. But the next petition is specially noteworthybut deliver us from the Evil One. A man never gets anything out of the devil, even if he conquers him. You will find in combat with him that even if you win the victory, you come off with gashes and wounds of which you will carry the scars to your grave. All the while, says Mr. Bunyan, while Christian was fighting with Apollyon, I did note that he did not so much as give one smile. Oh no, there is nothing to smile about when the arch-enemy is upon us. He is such a master of the cruel art of soul-wounding, that every stroke tells.

He knows our weak places in the present. He brings to remembrance our errors in the past and he paints in blackest colors the miseries of the future and so seeks to destroy our faith. All his darts are fiery ones. It takes all a mans strength and a great deal more to ward off his cunning and cruel cuts. The worst of it is that as in Peters case, he casts a spell over men so that they do not fight at all but yield themselves an easy prey. Our Savior said to Peter, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not. Peter was as much under the power of Satan as corn is in the hand of the man who winnows it. He went up and down in that sieve like a helpless thing and so passed from simple falsehood to plain denials of his Master with oaths and curses.

I desire in this discourse to speak chiefly of Peters restoration. Peter was down. But he was soon up again. One writer says the story should rather be called Peters restoration than Peters fall. His fall was soon overhe was like a little child learning to walk, scarcely down before his mother has him up again. It was not a continuance in a sin, like that of David, who remained for months without repentance. But it was the quick speech of a man carried away by sudden temptation and it was followed by a speedy repentance. Upon his restoration we are going to meditate.

It was brought about by two outward means. I like to think of the singular combinationthe crowing of the cock and a look from the Lord. When I come to preach to you it almost makes me smile to think that God should save a soul through me. I may find a fit image of myself in the poor rooster. Mine is poor crowing. But as the Masters look went with the birds crowing, so, I trust, it will go with my feeble preaching. The next time you also go out to try and win a soul for Jesus, say to yourself, I cannot do itI cannot melt a hard, rebellious heart. But yet the Lord may use me. And if there comes a happy conjunction of my feeble words with my Lords potent look, then the heart will dissolve in streams of repentance.

Crow away, poor birdif Jesus looks while you are crowing, you will not crow in vainbut Peters heart will break. The two things are joined together and let no man put them asunder commonplace instrumentality and the Divine Worker. Christ has all the glory and all the more glory because He works by humble means. I trust that there will be, this morning, a conjunction of the weakness of the preacher with the strength of the Holy Spirit so that stony hearts may be broken and God glorified.

This morning, first, let us look at the Lord who looked. And secondly let us look into the look which the Lord looked. And then, thirdly, let us look at Peter, upon whom the Lord looked. We will be all the while lookingmay our Lord look upon us. May His Holy Spirit work with His Holy Word!

I. First, LET US LOOK AT THE LORD, WHO LOOKED UPON PETER. Can you picture Him up there in the hall, up yonder steps, before the high priest and the council? Peter is down below in the area of the house warming his hands at the fire. Can you see the Lord Jesus turning round and fixing His eyes intently upon His erring disciple? What do you see in that look?

I see in that look, first, that which makes me exclaimWhat thoughtful love! Jesus is bound, He is accused, He has just been smitten on the facebut His thought is of wandering Peter. You want all your wits about you when you are before cruel judges and are called upon to answer false charges. You are the more tried when there is no man to stand by you, or bear witness on your behalfit is natural, at such an hourthat all your thoughts should be engaged with your own cares and sorrows. It would have been no reproach had the thoughts of our Lord been concentrated on His personal sufferings. And all the less so because these were for the sake of others.

But our blessed Master is thinking of Peter and His heart is going out towards His unworthy disciple. That same influence which made His heart drive out its store of blood through every pore of His body in the bloody sweat now acted upon His soul and drove His thoughts outward towards that member of His mystical body which was most in danger. Peter was thought of when the Redeemer was standing to be mocked and reviled. Blessed be His dear name, Jesus always has an eye for His people, whether He is in His shame or in His Glory.

Jesus always has an eye for those for whom He shed His blood. Though now He reigns in Glory, He still looks steadily upon His ownHis delight is in them and His care is over them. There was not a particle of selfishness about our Savior. He saved others; Himself He could not save. He looked to others but He never looked to Himself. I see, then, in

our Lords looking upon Peter, a wondrously thoughtful love.

I exclaim, next, What a boundless condescension! If our Lords eyes had wandered that day upon that other disciple that was known to the high priest, or if He had even looked upon some of the servants of the house, we should not have been so astonished. But when Jesus turns, it is to look upon Peter, the man from whom we should naturally have turned away our faces, after his wretched conduct. He had acted most shamefully and cruelly and yet the Masters eyes sought him out in boundless pity! If there is a man here who feels himself to be near akin to the devil, I pray the Lord to look first at him.

If you feel as if you have sinned yourself out of the pale of humanity by having cast off all good things and by having denied the Lord that bought you, yet still consider the amazing mercy of the Lord. If you are one of His, His pitying eyes will find you out. For even now it follows you as it did Hagar, when she cried, God see me. But oh, the compassion of that look! When first I understood that the Lord looked on me with love in the midst of my sin, it did seem so wonderful! He whom the heavens adore, before whose sight the whole universe is stretched out as on a map, yet passes by all the glories of Heaven that He may fix His tender gaze upon a wandering sheep and may in great mercy bring it back again to the fold. For the Lord of Glory to look upon a disciple who denies Him is boundless condescension!

But then, again, what tender wisdom do I see here! The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. He knew best what to doHe did not speak to him but looked upon him. He had spoken to Peter before and that voice had called him to be a fisher of men. He had given Peter His hand before and saved him from a watery grave when he was beginning to sink. But this time He gives him neither His voice nor His hand but that which was equally effectual and intensely suitableHe lent him His eyesThe Lord looked upon Peter.

How wisely does Christ always choose the way of expressing His affection and working our good! If He had spoken to Peter, the mob would have assailed him, or at least the ribald crowd would have remarked upon the sorrow of the Master and the treachery of the discipleour gracious Lord will never needlessly expose the faults of His chosen. Possibly no words could have expressed all that was thrown into that look of compassion. Why, Brethren, a volume as big as a Bible is contained within that look of Jesus.

I defy all the tongues and all the pens in the world to tell us all that our Divine Lord meant by that look. Our Savior employed the most prudent, the most comprehensive, the most useful method of speaking to the heart of His erring follower. He looked volumes into him. His glance was a Divine hieroglyphic full of unutterable meanings which it conveyed in a more clear and vivid way than words could have done.

As I think of that look again, I am compelled to cry outWhat Divine power is here! Why, dear Friends, this look worked wonders. I sometimes preach with all my soul to Peter and, alashe likes my sermon and forgets it. I have known Peter read a good book full of most powerful pleading and when he has read it through, he has shut it up and gone to sleep. I remember my Peter when he lost his wife and one would have thought it would have touched him and it didwith some natural feeling. Yet he did not return to the Lord, whom he had forsaken but continued in his backsliding.

See, then, how our Lord can do with a look what we cannot do with a sermon! What the most powerful writer cannot do with hundreds of pages and what affliction cannot do with even its heaviest stroke. The Lord looked and Peter wept bitterly. I cannot help thinking with Isaac Williams that there is a majestic simplicity in the expressions here usedThe Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter went out and wept bitterly. The passage reminds us of that first of GenesisAnd God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

As the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians and troubled the Egyptians, so did He now look into Peters heart and his thoughts troubled him. Oh, the power of the Lord Christ! If there was this power about Him when He was bound before His accusers, what is His power now that He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them? In that look there was Divinity. The Son of God looked upon Peterthe text does not use the name Jesus but it expressly says, The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. That Divine look did the deed.

Let me beg you to note what sacred teaching is here. The teaching is of practical value and should be at once carried out by the followers of Jesus. You, dear Friend, are a Christian man or a Christian woman. You have been kept by Divine Grace from anything like disgraceful sin. Thank God it is so. I dare say if you look within you will find much to be ashamed of. But yet you have been kept from presumptuous and open sins. Alas, one who was once a friend of yours has disgraced himselfhe was a little while ago a member of the Church but he has shamefully turned aside. You cannot excuse his sinon the contrary, you are forced to feel great indignation against his folly, his untruthfulness, his wickedness.

He has caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme and has done awful mischief to the cause of righteousness. Now I know what will be suggested to you. You will be inclined to cut his acquaintance, to disown him altogether and scarcely to look at him if you meet him in the street. This is the manner of menbut not the manner of Jesus. I charge you, act not in so un-Christlike a manner. The Lord turned and looked on Peterwill not His servants look on him? You are not perfect like your Lord. You are only a poor sinful creature like your fallen Brother. What? Are you too proud to look at the fallen one? Will you not give him a helping hand? Will you not try to bring him back?

The worst thing you can do with a backslider is to let him keep on sliding back. Your duty should be your pleasure and your duty is to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, remembering yourself also, lest you also be tempted. O Brothers and Sisters, it is a very little thing that has kept some of us from turning aside unto folly. One grain more and the

scale would have turned in favor of a great fall. Our steps have well-near slipped. When we are proud of our sure standing, the Lord may well be angry with us for our vanity and He may justly say, How can I endure this pride? I have taken great care of this man and watched over him to keep him out of sin and now he takes the credit of it all and plays the great man and fancies that he will be defiled if he associates with My poor wandering children.

Which, do you think, is worse in Gods sightthe sudden fall into sin, or the long-continued pride? Which boasts itself in the presence of the Lord and looks contemptuously upon erring ones? It is not my office to become a measurer of sins. But I would earnestly enforce this plain dutysince our own Lord and Master looked on backsliding Peter, let us seek out our wandering Brethren.

One more lessonobserve what heavenly comfort is hereThe Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Yes, Jesus looks upon sinners, still. The doctrine of Gods omniscience is far oftener set forth in a hard way than in a cheering way. Have you ever heard a sermon from, You God see me, of which the essence wastherefore tremble and be afraid? That is hardly fair to the text. For when Hagar cried, You God see me, it was because the Lord had interposed to help her when she had fled from her mistress. It was comfort to her that there she also had looked after Him that had looked upon her.

There is a dark side to You God see me. But it is not half so dark as it would be if God did not see us. It is true, O Sinner, that God has seen your sin and all the aggravations of it. But it is also true that as He sees your ruin, your misery, your sadness, He has compassion on you. He sees your sin that He may remove it and make you clean in His sight. As the Lord looked upon Peter, so He looks upon you. He has not turned His back on you. He has not averted the gaze of His pity. He sees to the bottom of your heart and reads all your thoughts. You have not to go about to find GodHe is looking upon you. He is not far from everyone of us. He is within eyesight. You are to look to Him. And if you do, your eyes will meet His eyes, for already He looks upon you.

I think we have gathered much from this brief look at the Lord who looked upon Peter. I doubt not that had we more time and more insight, we should see greater things than these.

II. Now let us go on to the second point and see whether we cannot gather still more instruction. LET US LOOK INTO THE LOOK WHICH THE LORD GAVE TO PETER. Help us again, most gracious Spirit!

That look was, first of all, a marvelous refreshment to Peters memory. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. What a sight it must have been for Peter! Our dear Masters face was that night all red from the bloody sweat. He must have appeared emaciated in body. His eyes weary with want of sleep and His whole countenance the vision of grief. If ever a picture of the Man of Sorrows could have been drawn, it should have been taken at that moment when the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.

By torchlight and the flickering flame of the fire in the court of the hall of Caiaphas, Peter saw a vision which would never fade from his mind. He saw the Man whom he loved as he had never seen Him before. This was He who called him, when he was fishing, to become a fisher of men. This was He who bade him spread the net and caused him to take an incredible quantity of fishes, insomuch that the boat began to sink and he cried out, Depart from me. For I am a sinful man, O Lord.

This was He who had made him walk on the water and at other times had rebuked the winds and raised the dead. This was He with whom Peter had been upon the Mount of Transfiguration! Truly there was a wonderful change from the glistening whiteness of the Mount to the ghastliness of that sad hour! Though the lines of that reverend face were stained with blood, yet Peter could tell that it was the same Lord with whom he had enjoyed three years of intimate companionship and tender unveiling. All this must, in a moment, have flashed upon poor Peters mind. And I do not wonder that in the remembrance of it all he went out and wept bitterly.

He did love His Lord. His denial was not of the heart but of the tongue. And, therefore, as all the grounds of his faith came before his mind anew, his heart was broken into a thousand pieces with grief that he should have been false to such a Friend. Yes, that look awoke a thousand slumbering memories and all these called upon the sincere heart of Peter to repent of its ungenerous weakness.

Next, that turning of the Master was a special reminder of His warning words. Jesus did not say it in words but He did more than say it by His look. Ah, Peter! Did not I tell you it would be so? You said, Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended. Did I not tell you that before cock-crowing you would deny Me thrice? No rebuke was uttered. And yet the tender eye of the Lord had revealed to Peter his own extreme folly and his Masters superior wisdom. Now he saw his own character and perceived his Lords discernment.

It was a prophecy and like all other prophecies, it was understood after it was fulfilled. We read that, Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He said unto him, Before the cock crowed, you shall deny Me thrice. It is clear, then, that our Lords look was a special reminder of His former wordsit stirred up Peters mind by way of remembrance and made him see how foolish he had been and how inexcusable was his fault.

Surely it was, also, a moving appeal to Peters heart. I bid you notice just now, in the reading of the chapter, that this story of Peter is singularly interwoven into the narrative of our Saviors passionit is so interwoven because it constitutes an essential part of that passion. We must not regard it as an accidental incident. It was part and parcel of that grief which He had to bear when He stood in our place. It was written of old, Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered. And this scattering of the sheep, of which Peter was a notable instance, was one of the bitter ingredients of our Redeemers mental anguish.

Lover and friend have You put far from Me, is His complaint in the

Psalm. When the Savior showed Himself to Peter with all those lines of grief upon His face, He seemed to say to him, Can you deny Me now? I am bound for you and do you deny Me? I stand here to be adjudged to death for you and do you deny Me? Now is the hour of My agony and do you deny Me? The Lord could not have looked at Peter without creating

strong emotions in the breast of the weak disciple who now found himself in so sad a plight. That look touched very tender cords. There was no need for a single word of appealthat look sufficed to stir the deepest part of Peters nature.

What do you think that look chiefly said? My thought about it, as I turned it over, was thiswhen the Lord looked upon Peter, though He did refresh his memory and make an appeal to his conscience, yet there was still more evident a glorious manifestation of love. If I may be permitted humbly and reverently to read what was written on my Masters face, I think it was thisAnd yet I love you, Peter, I love you still! You have denied Me but I look upon you still as Mine. I cannot give you up. I have loved you with an everlasting love and notwithstanding all your illconduct towards Me, I am looking for you and expecting to receive you. I have not turned My back on you.

Behold, I look towards you with tender regard, foreseeing that you will yet serve Me and prove the truth of your devotion to Me. Despair not, O Peter, for I will receive you again and you shall glorify Me. Judging what would break my heart the quickest if I had thus denied my Master, it seems to me that I should be most affected by His saying to me, And yet, despite your sin, I love you still. Love is the great heartbreaker. Immutable love is that Divine hammer which breaks the rock in pieces. Though a man should have sinned himself into great hardness of heart, yet almighty love can soften him. Who can resist the charms of Divine Grace unchangeable?

Sharper than a sword is a look of lovemore fierce than coals of juniper are the flames of love. One said, the other day, speaking of a person who has gone awfully astray after having been a preacher of the Word, If I did not believe in the doctrine of unchanging love I do not think I dare pray for him. But since I believe that God will bring him back again, I pray with humble confidence that he will be restored. That which is an encouragement to prayer for others will be a help towards our return if we have gone astray. I love to believe that my Lord will bring His wanderers back.

O you who are anxious to return to Him, let this cheer youYet does He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him. This doctrine wins men back. There are wicked men who turn it into an argument for continuing in sin. But their damnation is just. True men will see, in the measureless and unchanging love of Christ, a reason which will put wings to their feet when they hasten back to Him from whom they have gone astray.

Againthis look penetrated Peters inmost heart. It is not every look that we receive that goes very deep. I look with eyes of deep affection at men from this pulpit and I perceive that they know my meaning. But they soon shake it off. But our Savior has an eye to which the joints and marrow are visible. He looks into the secret chambers of the soul. For His look is a sunbeam and bears its own light with it, lighting up the dark places of our nature by its own radiance. Peter could not help feeling, for he was pricked in the heart by the arrow of Christs glance.

How many persons are affected by religion only in the head! It does not affect their heart and life. I am grieved when I hear of some of you who are regular hearers and take pleasure in my preaching and yet, after many years, you are not a bit better. You have had spasms of improvement but they have ended in nothing. You go back to the mire after you have been washed. You are a hearer of the Gospel and yet a drunkard. Your voice is heard in a Psalm but it may also be heard in an oath. It is a shocking thing. But I have done my best. I can preach to your ears but I cannot look into your hearts. Oh, that my Lord would give such a glance at you this morning as should impart light into you and cause you to see yourself and to see Him and then the tears would fill your eyes!

One fact must not escape our noticeour Lords look at Peter was a revival of all Peters looking unto Jesus. The Lords look upon Peter took effect because Peter was looking to the Lord. Do you catch it? If the Lord had turned and looked on Peter and Peters back had been turned on the Lord, that look would not have reached Peter, nor affected him. The eyes met to produce the desired result. Notwithstanding all Peters wanderings, he was anxious about his Lord and therefore looked to see what was done with Him. Even while he warmed his hands at the fire, he kept looking into the inner hall. His eyes were constantly looking in the direction of the Lord Jesus.

While he wandered about among the maids and male servants, talking to them, fool that he wasyet still he would perpetually steal a glance that way to see how it fared with the Man he loved. He had not given up the habit of looking to his Lord. If he had not still, in a measure, looked to his Master, how would the look of Jesus have been observed by him? His eyes must look through your eyes to get to your heart. The remainders of faith are the sparks among the ashes of piety and the Lord blows on these to raise a fire. If there is a poor soul here that, despite his backsliding, can yet feel, I am trusting in Jesus and if I perish, I will perish there, there is hope for that soul.

If you have given up the outward forms of religion it is a grievous faultbut if you still inwardly look to the Crucified, there is something in you to work upon. There is an eye which can receive the look of Jesus. It is through the eyes that look to Jesus, that Jesus looks and lets fresh light and hope into the soul. Oh that you who have this lingering faith in the Lord may now receive a look from Him which shall work in you a bitter, salutary, saving repentancewithout which you can never be restored!

This look was altogether between the Lord and Peter. Nobody knew that the Lord looked on Peter, except Peter and his Lord. That Divine Grace which saves a soul is not a noisy thingneither is it visible to any but the receiver. This morning, if the Grace of God comes to anyone of you in power, it will be unperceived by those who sit on either side of you in the pewthey will hear the same words but of the Divine operation

which accompanies them they will know nothingthe eyes of the Lord will not speak to them as it is speaking to the awakened one. Do you know anything of the secret love-look of the Lord Jesus?

The whole process may not have occupied more than a second of time. The Lord turned and looked on Peter. It took less time to do than it takes to tell. Yet in that instant an endless work was done. How soon can Jesus change the heart! He spoke and it was doneI venture to alter that verse and say, He looked and it was done. Lord, look on sinful Peter now! Work a miracle with your eyes! Even here, let some sinner look to You because You have looked on him.

III. Now I must go to my third pointLET US LOOK AT PETER AFTER THE LORD HAD LOOKED AT HIM. What is Peter doing? When the Lord looked on Peter the first thing Peter did was to feel awakened. Peters mind had been sleeping. The charcoal fire had not done him much good, the fumes of it are evil. The dust of Satans sieve had got into his eyes. He was confused with very sorrow for his dear Master, whom he truly loved. Peter was hardly Peter that night. I think I had better say, Peter was too much Peter, and his mind had more of Peters stone in it, than of Christs flesh.

He had forgotten that he was an Apostle. He had forgotten that which he had declared when the Lord said to him, Blessed are you, Simon BarJona: for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto you. Again, I remind you how significantly it is written, The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. For it hints that Peter now saw his Lords Deity through the veil of His humiliation and anguish. He had forgotten his Lords Deity and thus he had, in thought, denied his Lord. He was off the lines and was in a sleepy state. He was what Paul calls bewitched, and under the influence of a spiritual soporific, administered by Satan. The Lords look brought him to his better self and aroused all the spiritual life which had been dormant in himPeter rememberedand by this remembrance he was restored.

The next effect was, it took away all Peters foolhardiness. Peter had made his way into the high priests hall but now he made his way out of it. He had not felt in any danger, though in the worst of company. What did he care for the girl that kept the door? Surely he was too much of a man to mind her remarks. What did he care for the men that were round the fire? They were rough fellows but he had been a fisherman and quite able to cope with the priests bailiffs. But now the brag is gone out of him. No sooner had Jesus looked upon him than Peter declined all further risks. Now he shows the better part of valor and with great discretion quits the dangerous society of the high priests palace.

Revival of Divine Grace in the heart is the death of presumption. The man who runs risks with his soul is not in a right state of mind. Perhaps the Saviors glance conveyed a hint to Peter that he had no business where he was. It may have seemed to say to him, You had better be gone from these surroundings. At any rate, that was the effect it produced. That palace in which the Lord fared so badly could not be a fit place for a disciple. To be warming himself at the fire was quite inconsistent for Peter while Jesus was being mocked by His enemies. A sight of the Lord Jesus makes many things seem incongruous which else might appear right enough. All Peters daring vanished. He turned his back on maids and men and went out into the darkness of the night.

We do not hear of his coming near the Crossin fact, we hear no more of him till the resurrection morningfor Peter was sensible enough to feel that he could not trust himself any more. He placed himself in the background till his Lord summoned him to the front. I wish that some religious professors whose lives have been questionable had grace enough to do the same. When I see a man who has sinned grievously pushing himself speedily to the front, I cannot believe that he has a due sense of the evil he has worked, or of his own unfitness to be in the place of peril.

Above all, shun the place where you have fallen. Do not linger in it for a moment. Go out, even though you leave the comfortable fire behind you. Better be in the cold than stay where your soul is in danger. Till Peter had received from the Lords own mouth abundant assurance of his restoration to his office by the threefold charge to feed the sheep and lambs, we do not find him again in the forefront.

That look of Christ severed Peter from the crowd. He was no longer among the fellows around the fire. He had not another word to say to themhe quit their company in haste. It is well for Believers to feel that they are not of the world! They should flee out of Sodom. The Lord has severed us from the multitude by His Divine choice and the separation should be our choice.

Oh, that the arrows of the great Lord would this morning pierce some soul even as a huntsman wounds a stag! Oh, that the wounded soul, like Peter, would seek solitude! The stag seeks the thicket to bleed and die alone. But the Lord will come in secret to the wounded heart and draw out the arrow. Alone is the place for a penitent. Out in the darkness is far better for you than around the fire where coarse jokes are bandied while Christ is mocked. There must be confession and weeping alone. If Christ has looked upon you, you must get away from the men of the world and indeed from all others. The solitude of your chamber will suit you best.

That look of Christ also opened the sluices of Peters hearthe went out and wept bitterly. There was gall in the tears he wept, for they were the washings of his bitter sorrow. Dear Friends, if we have sinned with Peter, God grant us grace to weep with Peter. Many will think of Peters wandering who forget Peters weeping. Sin, even though it is forgiven, is a bitter thing. Even though Christ may look away your despair, He will not look away your penitence. He went out and wept bitterly. Oh, how he chided himself! How could I have acted so! How he smote his breast, and sighed, How can I ever look up? Yet is He very precious. That look forgave me. But I can never forgive myself.

He remembered it all his life and could never hear a cock crow without feeling the water in his eyes. Yet I want you to notice that that look of Christ gave him relief. It is a good thing to be able to weep. Those who cannot weep are the people that suffer most. A pent-up sorrow is a terrible sorrow. The Lord touched a secret spring and made Peters grief flow

out in floods. And that must have greatly eased him. I have frequently heard people say, I had a good cry, and after that, I was able to bear it. People die of bursting hearts when no tears relieve them. I thank God for Peter, that he could weep bitterly, for thus the Holy Spirit came to him with comfort.

O Master, look on some poor dry heart heresome poor heart that cannot feel its sinfulness but would if it couldand give it feeling! Look on the heart which cannot repent, that is crying, I would, but cannot feel contrition. Lord, You did make the rock yield water at the smiting of the roduse Your poor stick of a servant this morning to smite the rocky heart and let the waters of repentance flow out.

And now, to conclude, it made Peter as long as he lived, ashamed to be ashamed. Peter was never ashamed after this. Who was it that stood up at Pentecost and preached? Was it not Peter? Was he not always foremost in testifying to his Lord and Master? I trust that if any of us have been falling back and especially if we have wandered into sin, we may get such a restoration from the Lord, Himself, that we may become better Christians ever afterwards. I do not want you to break a bone, I pray God you never may. But if you ever do, may the heavenly Surgeon so set it that it may become thicker and stronger than before.

Courage was the bone in Peter which snapped. But when it was set, it became the strongest bone in his nature and never broke again. When the Lord sets the bones of His people they never break againHe does His work effectually. The man who has erred by anger becomes meek and gentle. The man who has erred by drink quits the deadly cup and loathes it. The man who has sinned by shame becomes the bravest of the company.

O Lord Jesus, I have tried to preach YOU this morning, but I cannot look with Your eyes. You must look on erring ones Yourself. Look, Savior! Look, Sinner! There is life in a look AT the crucified One, because there is life in a look FROM the crucified One. May Jesus look and by His Grace may the sinner look, too! Amen.

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PETERS FALL AND RESTORATION   
NO. 2771

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 23, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 22, 1882.

**And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times. So Peter went out and wept bitterly. Luke 22:61, 62.**

PETERS fall, as we noticed in our reading, is four times recorded, at considerable length, but it is not once excused. There is not, in any one of the records, a single word said by way of palliation of his great guilt. John pictures Peters sin in colors of an almost neutral tint, yet he does not lessen its gravity.

Why, do you think, is this sad record thus given four times? Is it not in order that we should give it fourfold attention? It deserves this special mention, first, because it must have greatly increased the grief of the Lord Jesus Christ to know that while He was enduring untold indignities on His peoples behalf, His most prominent disciple was denying Him with oaths and curses down at the lower end of the hall. Surely, this must have cut Him to the quick! I cannot imagine that any of the tortures that He endured from His enemies could have caused Him so much pain as this wicked denial by one of His closest friends. Let your pity and love to Jesus flow in deep and broad streams while you behold him that ate bread with Him thus lifting up his heel against Him and even declaring that He knows not the Man! Blessed Master, there is not one tint of all the colors of grief that is lacking in the picture of Your passion! It is not possible to depict sufferings more acute and intense than was Yours when You died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

But, next, I think that Peters fall and restoration are thus fully recorded to set forth the greatness of our Redeemers saving power in the immediate prospect of His cruel death upon the Cross. Is it not wonderful to think that before He dies, He restores this great backsliderI had almost said, this open apostate, for so he was, according to his own language, though he was not so in heart? I can, in imagination, see poor Peter bending before the Cross of Calvary and looking up, through tears of grief and joy, as he mourns his great guilt and sees it all forgiven!

Then comes the dying thief, to represent another class of characters who bring great Glory to our dying Lord. Peter is the backslider restoredthe dying thief is the sinner saved at the 11th hour. He was on the very brink of Hell, yet the Master stretched out His hand to rescue him, saying, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. I cannot imagine two incidents revealing greater Divine Grace than these two, which so richly adorn and embellish the Cross! As captives chained to the wheels of the returning conquerors chariot make his triumphal procession the more illustrious, so is Christ upon the Cross the more manifestly triumphant in His Infinite Grace as He leads the restored Peter back to his Apostleship and takes the penitent thief, plucked from Perdition, up with Himself into the Paradise of God!

Moreover, do you not think that there is, in this fourfold record, an instructive lesson for us concerning the frailty of the best of men? Holy Scripture does not tell us much about the best of men who lived in the olden timesits history of the saints is somewhat scantybut it is particular in recording their faults, as if its special purpose was to remind us that the best of men are but men at the best! This Peter, who seemed to lead the van, was yet so frail and fallibleso far from being the first Infallible Bishop of Romethat he even denied his Lord and Master! That is about the only point, so far as I can see, in which the Pope of Rome is like Peter, for he, too, has great presumption and he can, with his bulls and his curses, go about as far as Peter did in denying his Lord! Peters fall seems to say to each of us, You, too, are weak. You, too, will fall if you are left to yourself. Therefore trust wholly to your Master, but never trust in yourself. Look always to Him and rely not upon your own experience, or the firmness of your own resolutionsfor you will assuredly fall, as Peter did, unless the almighty hand of Christ shall hold you up.

These lessons might profit us even if we learned no others, but I think we may find some more as I now proceed to speak to you, first, concerning Peters fall. Next, concerning the means of his recovery. Thirdly, concerning the signs of his restoration and, afterwards, if we have time for them, I hope to make a few general remarks upon the whole incident of Peters fall and restoration.

I. First, then, concerning PETERS FALL.

It was a very sad fall because it was the fall of one of the most favored of Christs disciples. We know that there is such a thing as election and that there is such a thing as election out of election and, in the case of Christs disciples, the principle was carried still further, for there were some who were the elect out of the elect of the elect! Christ had many disciples, yet He said to the Apostles, I have chosen you twelve. Out of those twelve, he had evidently chosen threePeter, James and John who were privileged to be with Him on various occasions when all others were shut out. Peter had been especially favored, so that probably not even John surpassed him in the honor which his Master had put upon him. After his declaration concerning Christs Messiahship and Deity, Jesus said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in Heaven. So you see that Peter was a highly favored manand for him to deny his Master was a very terrible sin. The higher our privilege, dear Friends, the greater is our responsibility! The nobler our vocation is, the more horrible is our sin when we fall into it.   
Secondly, Peters fall was especially sad because he had been faithfully warned concerning it. Our Lord had said to the eleven, All of you shall be offended because of Me this night. And then, when Peter declared that he would not be offended, our Lord plainly foretold his triple denial. When Jesus, after the first part of his agony in the garden, came back to the three especially favored disciples and found them all asleep, he said to Peter, Simon, do you sleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch you and pray lest you enter into temptation. So that Peter knew the danger to which he was exposed. He was not, as some inexperienced persons are, surprised all of a suddencarried off their feet by a fierce tornado of temptation. If he did not watch and pray, he ought to have done so, for he had been expressly warned, yes, and told that in that very night, not only would he be in danger, but that he would actually fall into the snare which Satan, the great fowler, was setting for him! After that warning, he was not like a bird caught in a trap which it has not seen, but like one that flies boldly into the snare. Solomon says in Proverbs, Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any birdyet Peter ran into it in spite of all the warning that he had received. This made his sin all the greater! And if any of you sin against the Light of God, your sin will be all the more gross and aggravated.   
Further, the guilt of Peters sin is enhanced by the fact that it came so soon after his claim of fidelity to his Master. He had said to Jesus, Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended. Now, mark that declaration was made in the evening and the sun had not risenthe cock had not crowedbefore he had thrice denied his Master! It may have been quite late in the evening when he uttered his boastful declaration and the night had only darkened down to midnight, or an hour or two after, before he had, with oaths and curses, denied that he even knew his Lord. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if we eat our words as soon as thatif we go home from this House of Prayer and fall into sin. Or if tomorrow, while yet the sacred bread of the Communion Table is scarcely digested, we shall so act as practically to deny Christit will be a very terrible thing! It would have been bad enough if Peter had sinned thus 20 years after making his profession of love to Christ but to deny his Lord an hour or two after such a vehement declaration this was wicked, indeed!   
Observe, also, that Peters sin had degrees in it. This makes it the more interesting to us, especially if we have, ourselves, gone any part of the same evil way, for, the first time he denied his Master, it was not in the same style as the third time. Being let into the High Priests palace, the damsel who opened the door looked him in the face and, afterwards, when Peter was sitting with the servants and officers around the fire, this somewhat busy lady came up to him and, gazing into his face, said, You, also, were with Jesus of Galilee. Peter made a kind of evasive answer. There was a sort of subterfuge in itI know not what you are saying. As much as if he had said, I do not understand you. This was really a denial of Christ, but he had so worded it as to quiet his conscience to some extenthe had not positively, in so many words, denied his Master. He was trying to do a little dodging, as some people nowadays do, and he thought, perhaps, that he might be able to draw back from the position into which he had been led by his curiosity. There was no oath the first time, no cursingbut a simple evasive answerreally, in Gods sight, a denial of his Lord, yet not so pronounced as it afterwards became.   
The second time, he seems to have got up from where he sat by the fire. He was evidently not comfortable there and he had gone out to the porch, a good way off from the rest. And then, still wanting to see the end of the matter, he had come back. He did not press his way into the inner circle around the fire, and sit there, but he stood and leaned forward just to warm his hands. And then it was that this woman, noticing how restless he had been, came up with a companion of hers and, looking at him, began to say to the other woman, I know that he is one of them, I am sure that he is. And then she and the other both broke out saying, You were with Him! We are sure you were with Him. And the men joined in the cry, perhaps most of them said, Oh, yes, he is one of them! And then Peter denied with an oath, I do not know the Man. Oh, how dreadful for him to call Christ, the Man, when he had boldly declared that He was the Son of God! What a terrible fall was this!   
After this, Peter gets up and goes away from the fire altogether. It is a large place, so he still keeps within the enclosure, but he gets up into a corner where the light does not fall upon him. And there he remains for about an hour, not very easy, you may be sure. At last, he begins to talk to those around him. He thought that they would not find him out, now, because the firelight did not reach so far, but he did not remember that his tongue would tell tales, for those near him said, Listen! That fellow has the accent of Galilee! He is a Galilean and all the people who were with Jesus were Galileans. Depend upon it, he is one of them! We are sure that he is, for his speech betrays him. The accent of his countrified speech showed Peter up as being one of the fishers from the Lake of Galileeso now they come all around him and they said to him, We know that you are a disciple of Jesus. Then there was the High Priests servant, whose kinsmans ear Peter had cut offhe said, Did not I see you in the Garden with Him? I carried a lantern and I know that you are the man that chopped my relations ear off. I am sure that you are! Then Peter, worst of all, not only denied his Master, but, as if he knew that a true Christian would not swear and, therefore, the way to prove that he was no Christian was to curse and swear, therefore he did it! He cursed and swore to convince them that he was not a disciple of Jesus Christ. Oh, but this was dreadful! This was terrible! No excuse is given for Peter in Gods Word, nor will we try to think of any, but we will, each one of us, pray, Hold You me up and I shall be safe.   
There is another aggravation of Peters sin which I must mention, that is that all this was done very close to where his Lord and Master was suffering at that time. I think that this Tabernacle might very well picture the kind of place that palace was. Take away those galleries and leave this upper portionhere is Christ, with the High Priests and all the rest of them, in this upper part. Perhaps it was not so much raised above the rest of the hall as this platform is, but, still, it was a raised place. And there were the servants sitting down below where they could see everything, and also be seen, in the open square with a big fire blazing up in the midstsending its volumes of smoke up to the midnight sky. And there is the Christ, His back turned towards Peter, but He is within hearing. Oh, I think that fact alone ought to have checked Peters tongue and inspired him with such love, pity and sympathy that he would have found it impossible to deny his Master. And for you and me to sin in the very Presence of the Majesty of Heaven, (and all sin does that), is an enormous crime.   
What was the reason why Peter thus sinned? I answer, first, that it was because of his fear of man. Bold Peter became a raving coward! And, ah, how many have denied their Master because they have been afraid of a jest or a jeer! It was but a silly maid and another gossip with her, and a few idle women and men around the outdoor fire, but Peter was afraid of them and, therefore, he was not afraid to deny his Master.   
Perhaps the chief reason for Peters denial of his Lord was his confidence in himself. If Peter had felt himself to be weaker, he would really have been stronger. But, because he felt so strong in himself, he therefore proved to be weak as water and so denied his Master.   
We know, also, that it was caused by a lack of watchfulness and prayer on the part of Peter. He was off his guard when he was sitting or standing comfortably by the fire and, therefore, he fell so sadly. His fall was caused, I expect, by a general lack of steadfastness in his character. He was impetuous, impulsive, quick, ready, brave, courageous, but, at the same time, he lacked backbone. He did, even after this, lack that essential element of a strong character, for Paul had to withstand him to the face, because he was to be blamed. But, in this time of testing, he manifested a sad lack of solidity of character. He was carried away by surrounding circumstances and even when they happened to be against his Lord and Master, he was still carried away with them! Those of you who have abundance of life in you, and plenty of force of character, must make sure that you also have the force of Grace, lest your vivacitythe very thing which makes you to be leaders among usshould become your ruin in the time of trial! He is well kept whom God keeps and he it is also who, with prayer and watchfulness, guards himself against all the dangers that surround him. Thus I have tried to describe to you Peters fall.

II. Now, secondly, notice THE MEANS OF PETERS RECOVERY. They are worth notice.   
The first means was, the crowing of the cock. It seemed strange that it should crow, the first time, before the period that was known among the Jews as the cock-crowing. That happened after Peter had denied his Master once, but he does not appear to have taken any notice of it, for he afterwards denied his Master again and yet again. And just as he was speaking the third time, while the words were in his mouth, shrill and clear over that palace wall came the clarion of the cock. Oh, that crow must have gone home to Peters heart! We cannot preach half such impressive sermons as that bird then delivered, for its message forced its way into Peters conscience! God has many ways of reaching mans conscience. I have known Him touch the conscience by very singular meansvery frequently by the observation of a little childby the sudden death of a neighbor or a friendeven by some sentence in a newspaper. There are many birds that God can cause to crow when He bids them, and they startle the sinner as much as that one in Jerusalem startled Peter! But that was not enough, nor was it half enough to bring him to repentance.   
The next thing that touched Peter, and the main thing, was the look of Christ. It is not possible for any of us to give such a look as that. It was such a look as Jehovah gave to the primeval darkness when He said, Let there be light, and the darkness was dissipated by one glance of Jehovahs eyes. So the darkness, which the devil had cast over Peters soul, was made to fly by one flash from the eyes of Jesus! There were volumes of meaning in that look. Is that Peter, who declared that he would never deny Me? Remember, Peter, what I said, and what you answeredand see which of us turns out to be right. That look also said to Peter, All these griefs and all this shame that I am enduring do not pierce Me so keenly to the heart as your denial does. Yet was it not also a look of inexpressible tenderness, as if the Master said by it, I still love you, Peter, so come back to Me and I will yet restore you! I think it was a heartpiercing look and a heart-healing look all in onea look which revealed to Peter the blackness of his sin and also the tenderness of his Masters heart towards him. That look did the workthat was the great means of Peters recovery. First, the crowing of the cock, or something in Providence, and then the look of Christ, or something of Grace.   
Then, what came in next was Peters remembrance of Christs words, for that look awakened his memory and his memory reminded him of all that his Master had said to himand of all the happy fellowship he had had with the dear Master and what wonders he had seen Him do. I daresay that Peter remembered how he had once walked upon the water and how he began to sink until Jesus stretched out His hand to save him. At any rate, memory did its work, for, Peter called to mind the words that Jesus said unto him, Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times. And when he thought about it, he wept. So those three things co-operated in producing Peters recovery.   
But there was one thing, at the back of all these, which we must never forgetthat is, the prayer of Christ for Peter. He said to him, I have prayed for you, and the effect of that prayer was made apparent in the Apostles restoration. That look was effectual upon Peter because the Lord Jesus had, in private, made prevalent intercession for him. So his faith was not to fail him and he was to come out of the devils sieve with not one particle of the genuine wheat that was in him, fallen to the ground, but only the chaff taken away! That was the great means which Christ used for Peters recovery and I beg you, dear Friends, to emulate your Saviors example in this respect. Pray for the fallen, look lovingly and pitifully upon the fallen, for your very look may do them good. Speak to the fallen, seek to guide the fallen back to Christ and who knows how many of them you may be helped to restore?   
III. Now, in the third place, I am to speak very briefly upon THE SIGNS OF PETERS RESTORATION. What are those signs?   
First, he went out. There was something suggestive in that action of his. It might be very cold outside, but Peter left the warmth of the fire. His heart was hot within him, so he could stand the cold and, therefore, he went out. It is always a sign of repentance in Christians who have fallen when they leave the company where they were led astray. If any of you were once professors of the faith and you have turned aside through the evil associations that you have formed, cut yourselves loose from those associations at once! Oh, someone says, but I might be a loser if I were to do so. You cannot lose as much as you will if you lose your soul! Oh, but I do not see how I can escape. You must find a way of escape somehowyou must do as Lot did. Though he had all his wealth in Sodom, he had to flee from itand the message to you professors who are among the ungodly is, Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing. Thus Peter went out and it was a wise thing for him to do.   
He not only went out, but he wept. As he kept on turning over his sin, it appeared to him in all its blackest hue. We are told that he wept bitterly. Convulsive weeping came upon himhe could not stand himselfhis very heart seemed as if it would flow away in rivers of repentant tears.   
It is a blessed sign of the work of Grace in the soul when the man who has sinned quits his evil companions and mourns over his sin as one who is in bitterness for his first-born. If any of you have sinned like Peter, go and weep like Peter. If you have fallen like Peter, then let your soul bitterly bewail your transgression. Many talk about the greatness of Davids sin, but if they knew the depths of Davids repentance and the heartbreak that came with it, they would not so glibly speak of it. There is a tradition that Peter never heard a cock crow, or thought of this incident, as long as he lived, without weeping. And although that is only a tradition, I can well believe it was the case, for that is just what would be likely to happen to a true penitent.   
IV. Now I close with A FEW GENERAL REMARKS UPON THE INCIDENT.   
My first remark isChristian, it is bad for you to be in evil company. It was bad for Peter to be among those who were standing or sitting round that fire. On a cold night everyone likes a nice comfortable fire. Yes, but you had better suffer discomfort and inconvenience rather than associate with wicked men. Peter was sitting in the seat of the scorner, so we do not wonder that, at last, he used the scorners language! Keep out of evil company if you possibly can. If you are obliged to go where bad language is used, do just as you do when you have to go out in a shower of rain carry an umbrella to shield you from the rain and go through it as quickly as you can. When, in your daily calling, you have to mix with ungodly men, carry the spirit of watchfulness and prayer with youand slip away from their society as quickly as you can.   
My next remark is that it is idle for a true disciple to try to disown his discipleship. Peter says, I am not one of Christs disciples, but, even by the firelight, he looks like one of them. He swears that he is not and gets away up in the corner where there is no light. But, as soon as he begins talking, they say, You are one of them! His very speech causes him to be discoveredand if you are a genuine Christian, you can no more hide yourself than can the violet in the grass, whose perfume tells the passerby that it is there! There is something about you which will cause people to find you out. I should recommend those of you who have believed in Christ, but have not joined the Church, or made a confession of your faith, to do so speedily because, whether you do so or not, the ungodly will be down upon you! When once Christ sets the mark of His Cross upon your forehead, all sorts of people will see it and they will say, You are one of Christs followers! Your very speech betrays you. There is something about you that is different from the rest of us, and which tells us that you have been with Jesus. Do not try to hide this distinguishing mark if you have itand even if you do, you will not be able to do so.   
The next general remark iswhen you have to depict your own character, always use the black pencil. Never try to extenuate anything. We shall never have any biographies, written by uninspired men, after the fashion of these Bible biographies. I am sure that if Peter had been the minister of a neighboring Baptist Church and had died, and I had been asked to write his biography, I should not have mentioned his denial of his Lord. Or if I had done so, I would have had his wife down on me if she was alive! And, if not, all the members of the congregation would have said, What a shame it was to say anything about that matter after the man was dead! Mr. Spurgeon has written a brother-ministers biography and he has put in all the details of that sad incident which ought to have been suppressed. Very likely it ought to be, but it never is suppressed in the Bible narrativeswe get all that happens recorded there. When Mark wrote, as we believe, under the guidance of Peter, he did not keep back anything, but put all down as black as it really was!   
But, next, when you are writing of a Brothers character, try to describe it as fairly as possible, for that is what John does in his description of Peters fall. It is very mildly drawn compared with Peters own account of it. We must never say what is false, but when there has been something that is wrong, let us always put the kindest construction we possibly can upon it. There are always two ways of telling a tale and they may both be true. The one is to lay heavy stress upon all the faults. The other is to do as John doesto mention them, but to say no more about them than he feels really obliged to say. Let us be truthful, but let it never seem as if we had any grudge against the wrongdoer. The sacred writers often teach us this lesson and here, Peter gives the worst account of himself, and John gives a more favorable report concerning his erring Brother.

Another remark I have to make isobserve the power that is in peoples eyes. You must often have noticed this. What a power there was in that maids eyes when she gazed earnestly upon Peter! It was that earnest gaze of the girl that made Peter deny his Master. But, then, see the power for good that there was in Christs eyes. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Eyes can say far more than lips can! Often there is more heart-affecting eloquence in the eyes than there is in the tongue. Sometimes you Christian people, members of the Church, may be by the side of a man who utters a wrong wordbut you need not tell him of itjust look at him, that will be enough. If an ungodly man shall even swear in your presence, do not give him a supercilious look, as much as to say, O you wicked sinner, to do such a thing in the presence of such a holy man as I am! But there is another kind of look, as if you felt so grieved and were amazed that he could so take in vain the name of the ever-blessed Godthat is the sort of look to give him. If the Lord will manage your eyes for you, you will find that they will be potent messengers of love for Him. God give you to have those sanctified eyes which can work wonders for Him!   
My last remark is thiswhat a mercy it was that Christ did not treat Peter as Peter treated Him! Peter said, I know not the Man. Ah, me, but if the blessed, meek and lowly One had said, I know not the man, it would have been all over with Peter! May God grant that Christ may not say of anyone of us, at the Last Great Day, I know not the man! He will say it of all who know Him not, and whom He does not knowthey are not acquainted with one anotherand if they continue as they are, He will say, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Though He has eaten and drunk in your presence and taught in your streets, yet will He say, I know you not. Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. The mercy is that He never said that to Peter. And He will never say that to you, or to me if we come and cast ourselves in penitence at His feet, bemoaning our sin, and putting our trust in Him alone! May God grant this blessing to each one of you, dear Friends for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**MATTHEW 26:31-35, 57, 58, 69-75; MARK 14:53, 54, 66-72; LUKE 22:54-62; JOHN 18:15-18, 25-27.**

The story of Peters denial of his Master is recorded in all four of the Gospels. There are some differences of expression in each version, so it will not be repetitious if we read all four of them. And if we read them attentively, we shall get a clear view of the whole incident.

Matthew 26:31-33. Then Jesus said unto them, All you shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended. This was a very presumptuous speech, not only because of the self-confidence which it displayed, but also because it was a flat contradiction of what the Master had just said. All you shall be offended because of Me this night. Peter thought he knew better than Christ did, so he said, Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.

34. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, That this night, before the cock crowThe cock-crowing was a recognized mark of time; it was just before the rising of the sun. This night, before the rooster crows

34, 35. You shall deny Me thrice. Peter said unto Him, Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You. Here, again, he contradicts his Master straight to His face!

35. Likewise also said all the disciples.  
57, 58. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him afar off unto the high priests palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.   
69-75. Now Peter sat outside in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, You also were with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what you say. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the Man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely you also are one of them; for your speech betrays you. Then he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the Man. And immediately the cock crew. Then Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times. And he went out and wept bitterly. Now let us read Marks account, which will especially interest you if you remember that, probably, Mark wrote under the direction of Peter and, no doubt, received many of his facts from Peter. You will notice how severe is this description of the whole sceneit is just such an one as the chief actor in it would be sure to give as he recalled his fall and restoration.  
Mark 14:53, 54. And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. Then Peter followed Him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. Thus we learn what a cold night it wasthat night in which the Saviors sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Often, at Jerusalem, the days are extremely hot, yet the nights are as cold as if it were winter through the abundant dews that fall and cause a dampness everywhere.   
66, 67. And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there came one of the maids of the high priest: and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him. I think I see her, with her eyes fixed upon him, as he was warming himself at the fire: She looked upon him.   
67, 68. And said, And you also were with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what you say. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. This first time was not the regular time of cock-crowing, but those birds crow when they please. Before the fixed period called the cock-crow, Peter was to deny his Master three timesthis was the first time.   
69, 70. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely you are one of them: for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it. You have the peculiar brogue of that part of the country. You are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.

71, 72. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this Man of whom you speak. And the second time the cock crew. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times. And when he thought about it, he wept. He does not say that he went out and wept bitterly, as Luke says in his version of the incident.

This is Peters own account of it, so he says as little as he can to his own credit, while he tells all that is to his discredit. You notice that there seem to be some slight differences between these two accounts and it is quite natural that it should be so. If any two honest men here were to describe any scene that they had witnessed, the two would be sure to differ in some particulars, yet both accounts might be true. Matthew tells us that Jesus said to Peter, Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times, but Mark tells us that He said, Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times. Yes, but there is no real contradiction, and the incident introduced by Mark shows how, to the very letter, both of those utterances of our Savior were fulfilled, So is it with regard to those who spoke to Peter. When we come to another account, you will see that they differ very considerably, yet they are all true, for all that.

Luke 22:54-56. Then took they Him, and led Him, and brought Him into the high priests house. Then Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire. The flickering light helped to reveal his features to this maid as he sat by the fire.

56-58. And earnestly looked upon him and said, This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not. And after a little while another saw him and said, You are also of them. Then Peter said, Man, I am not. Both Matthew and Mark say that it was a maid, and another maid who spoke to Peter. And now Luke mentions a manbut there is no reason why all three of them could not have united in bringing this charge. One maid began the accusation, and the others joined with her, so the whole story is correct.

59-61. And about the space of one hour later another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilean. Then Peter said, Man, I do not know what you are saying. And immediately, while he yet spoke, the cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. The Savior had been standing in the upper part of the room which was, probably, roofed over, while Peter and the rest were down below in the courtyard, which was open to the sky and, therefore, they needed a fire to warm them. Jesus had been standing before His judge, but all of a sudden, as the cock crew, He turned and looked at Peter.

61. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, Before the cock crow, you will deny Me three times. That cockcrowing had come at the very moment Christ had foretold, for Peter had already denied his Master thrice.

62. So Peter went out and wept bitterly. Now hear what John has to say about this matter. He wrote after the other three Evangelists and he generally supplies their deficiencies. He it is who tells us how Simon Peter got into the hall.

John 18:16. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. You know who that was, for John always hides his own name as much as possible.

15, 16. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then went out that other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, and spoke unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. No doubt she had a lamp in her hand, that she might watch the features of those who were admitted. So, when Peter came in, she had a good view of his face and, afterwards, when he was at the fire, this is the woman who went and showed him up.

17. Then the damsel that kept the door said unto Peter, Are not you also one of this Mans disciples? She evidently knew that John was one of them, so she put this question to Peter, Are not you also one of this Mans disciples?

17, 18. He said, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. Matthew tells us that, at first, he sat with them, but now he is standing, as though he was uneasy, or going out and coming in again. And now he is questioned again.

25-27. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Are not you also one of His disciples? He denied it and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, said, Did not I see you in the Garden with Him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew. John does not say anything about Peters oath, or about his cursing because that had been told by the others, and John had no desire to write anything that would reflect upon Peter. Indeed, he tells us that it was he who went and spoke to the maid that let Peter inhe seems as if he wished us to know that he had been the means of introducing Peter to the place of temptation! And it is interesting to remember that he was the man who was with Peter on the morning of the Resurrection, so that no doubt he had been the first to find him after his fall.

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 #2825 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MAJESTY IN MISERY   
NO. 2825

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, APRIL 5, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 7, 1883.

**And the men that held Jesus mocked Him and struck Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him saying, Prophesy, who is it that struck You? And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him. Luke 22:63-65.**

I SUPPOSE that all this cruelty took place while our Lord was before Caiaphas, in the dead of night, before the Sanhedrim had been fully gathered together to hold their trial at daybreak. His enemies were in so great a hurry to condemn Him that as soon as He arrived at the high priests house, they had a kind of preliminary examination that they might try the tack upon which they meant to sail in endeavoring to procure a conviction against Him. Thus, after He had been, in an informal and illegal way, condemned without any proper trial, they left Him in the custody of their officers until early in the morning when they summoned the rest of their companions, so as to go through again the farce of trying Him whom they knew to be innocent.

While these officials had Christ in their keeping, they might at least have left Him in peace and quietness. According to the rules of all civilized nations, a prisoner detained in custody should be guarded from insult and ill-treatment while in that condition. Whatever his ultimate punishment may be after he has been tried and found guilty, while he is as yet uncondemned, he is reckoned to be under the protection of the State that has arrested himand he ought not to be subjected to insult or injury. But here, as if they had been so many savages, the judges of our Lord abandoned Him to those outcasts whom they employed to do their foul workand those wretched creatures treated Him with mingled cruelty and scornThe men that held Jesus mocked Him and struck Him. Could they not have allowed Him a little time of rest? The traces of the bloody sweat must still have been upon Him. They could see, by the emaciation of His Person, that He was, as it had been long before foretold that He would be, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He must already have been ready to faint under the rough usage which had been meted out to Him both before and at His preliminary trials before Annas and Caiaphas. His tormentors must have seen how exhausted He was, yet they had no pity for Him in their hard, unfeeling hearts! They allowed Him no respite and gave Him no opportunity to prepare Himself to answer the charges that were about to be brought against Him. There were none found to vindicate His Character, or to plead His causeand the intervals between the informal and the more formal trials were spent in mockery and in scorn.

These men were gross cowards. I am sure that they must have been because they were so cruel, for cruelty is one of the badges of cowardice wherever you find it. These are the very men who, in the garden, went backward, and fell to the ground, when Christ did but say, I am He, in answer to their declaration that they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth. They went out, with swords and staves, to take Him prisoner, yet they fell to the ground when He did but speak a word or two to them! But now that they had Him in their power and perceived that He was, apparently, not inclined to exert the Divine energy with which He was endowed, but that He was as submissive as a sheep before her shearers, they determined to be as cruel as they could be to Him. God grant that the sin of cruelty to anything that lives may never be justly laid to the charge of any one of us! If you have acted cruelly, even though it is to the meanest thing in creation, despise yourself, for you are of a lower order than the creature that you tortured! And if these men could have judged themselves aright, they would have despised themselves. They seem to me to have been the very meanest of mankind who, having such a gentle Sufferer in their power, instead of showing any humanity to Him, seemed as if they could not sufficiently abuse Him. And so they indulged their vile nature to the utmost in mocking and persecuting Him.

I. I hope that some spiritual profit may come to us while we are considering this terrible part of the suffering of our Lord. And, first, I want you, in imagination, to, gaze upon MAJESTY IN MISERY.

There stands Jesus of Nazareth. I will not attempt to picture Him. There has never yet been a painter who could portray the lineaments of that wondrous face! The highest art has never yet been able to satisfy itself upon that point even though it has borrowed its outline and its colors from the Scriptures themselves. The most skillful hand grows unsteady in the Presence of One so glorious in His griefs. I will not, therefore, attempt to draw a portrait of my Lord and Master, but will simply ask you, by faith, to behold Him, clothed with the garment that was without seam, bound, delivered over to the officers and surrounded by them while they mocked and scoffed at Him. Letting your eyes rest upon Him in a loving look, regarding Him as the great center of your hearts affection, what do you seeyou who believe in His Deityand who can say that He is very God of very God to you?

If your eyes are opened by the Spirit of God, you will see Omnipotence held captive. The men that held Jesus did not really know who He was. He appeared to them to be a poor Galilean peasant. Speaking the country brogue, they saw that He was a humble, lowly, emaciated Man and, as He had been committed to their charge, they held Him as their prisoner. But they did not recognize that He was the Almighty God, the very Deity that created the heavens and the earth, for, all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. He was, at that very moment, upholding all things by the word of His power and, amid all His weakness, and in all His sufferings, He was still over all, God blessed forever, whom all the holy angels continued to adore. Is it not a great mystery that Omnipotence should thus be held captive? What a marvelous thing it is that He who can create or who can destroy, according to the good pleasure of His own will, should take upon Himself our nature and in that Nature should sink so low as to become subject even to the very coarsest and most cruel of mankind! What a wondrous stoop of condescension is here! Omnipotence allows itself to be bound and never proves itself more truly Omnipotent than when it restrains itself and permits itself to be held as a prisoner by sinful men!

Look again at this Majesty in misery and you will see glory mocked, for the men that held Jesus mocked Him. To them He seemed to be a fit subject for ridicule and derision in professing to be a king, when He had neither an armed host nor multitudes of followers who could hope to stand for a single second against the mighty Caesar who held Israel in bondage! Yes, but there was a Glory in Christ which He had deigned to veil and to conceal for a while, but which angels still beheld and adored yet these men were mocking Him! There are some themes which seem to strike a speaker dumb and this subject has something like this effect upon me. It appears to me amazing that the God who had reigned in Glory over myriads of holy angels, should be mocked by miscreants who could not even have lived an instant longer in His Presence if He had not permitted them to do so! Yet I see, in my text that He who made the heavens and the earth stood there to be despised and rejected of men and to be treated with the utmost contumely and scorn. I can make that statement, but you cannot realize what it means. This is one of those great mysteries of the faith that seem to stagger you. You believe it without the slightest hesitation, yet, the more you try to really grasp and comprehend it, the more it seems to elude you and to tower above you!

Thus, we see Omnipotence held captive and Glory mocked. Next, we see Goodness smittenperfect, infinite, unutterable Goodness stricken, bruised, assailed, assaultedThe men that held Jesus mocked Him and struck Him. To strike wickedness is an act of justice. And even to lift the sword against oppression may not always be a thing to be condemned. But to strike Him who never did any man a wrong, but who has done all men some measure of good and who has given to some men all conceivable goodah, this is indeed brutish! The blessed Son of God who stood there, had within His soul that mercy which endures forever, yet they struck Himthere burned in His heart a love which many waters could not quench and which the floods could not drown, yet they struck Him! He had come here upon no errand of vengeance, but to bring peace and goodwill to menand to set up a Kingdom of joy and loveyet they bound Him! Ah, me, it is amazing that Goodness should be so good as to submit to this shameful indignity! None but Divine Goodness would have submitted to it.   
See what these mockers and smiters did next to our Lord. They produced a handkerchief, or a cloth of some kind, and they put it over His eyes. Omniscience must seem to be blinded, which, in truth, it cannot be. Yet, in the Christ there was the Omniscience of the Godhead and, to the utmost of their power, these men blinded Him in the hope that He might not see what they were doing. I know some who are trying to act that way at this present time. The only god that they have is a blind god. They believe in what they call, the forces of nature, and then they condescendingly talk as though God was only the aggregate of the forces of nature working according to certain mechanical laws that can never be altered. The god in whom they profess to believe is a god that does not see. They tell us that it is idle to pray, or to think that God takes any interest in such insignificant individuals as we are. Ah, I remember reading about those gods of the philosophersThey 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. They that make them are like unto them; so is everyone that trusts in them. But our God is in the heavens, seeing all that happens and doing as He pleases among the hosts above and among men below. He is not now to be blindfolded, as He was once, when He condescended to wear our nature and to bear our sin. Yet it is amazing that He should ever have permitted this indignity to be put upon Him. The spouse in the Canticles truly sings, His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly setexceeding the very stars of Heaven for brightnessyet they covered them over! His eyes flamed with love and in them there did gleam bright diamonds of pity for all the sorrows of mankindyet those cruel men did hide those precious eyes of His, blindfolding the Christ of God!   
Now, surely, they had made Him suffer enough, far too muchyet again the infinite beauties of His blessed Countenance were to be marred, for they struck Him on the face. Oh, but had we been there, we say, our indignation would have burned against them for striking that dear face! Yet we had need lay aside our indignation and bring forward penitence, instead, for we, also, have sometimes struck that dear face of Jesus, which is as the Sun of Heaven, far brighter than the sun which lights up the world! All other beauties put together cannot equal the marvelous charms of that Countenance which was marred more than any mans. There is nothing under Heaven, or in Heaven, itself, that can rival the face of the Well-Beloved, yet these men struck it! I think an angel might well shiver with horror if, for the first time, he heard that men had struck the face of His Lord! It was but His Human face, it is true, but therein they struck at all of Deity that they could reach. It was man striking God in the face! A slap in the face of Deity was what it really meant. Ah, me, that my Master should ever have had to endure such insult and painthat He should ever have been willing to suffer such indignity as thiswas there ever love like unto His?  
Then the mockers said, Prophesy, who is it that struck You! That was Justice defied. They seemed to say to our Lord, as they struck Him, Tell us what our name is; say who struck that blow. You cannot resist it. You cannot avenge Yourself, but, at least, see if You can tell the name of him that struck You. We defy You to do it. Ah, He had written down their names and they will find out, one day, that He knows them all, for there are none who strike the Savior who will not have their blows come back upon themselves unless they repent of their sin! There was Justice defied, as they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that struck You?   
I say again that I am not worthily able to speak on such a theme as this. And I think I never shall be, however long I may live. It is not within the compass of lips of clay, with words of air, to describe the condescending sufferings of Him who, though He was rightly called, Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, nevertheless stooped so low as to be mocked, struck, blindfolded, and struck again for your sakes and mine   
*Vexed, I try and try again,   
Still my efforts are all in vain   
Living tongues are dumb at best,   
We must die to speak of Christ.*   
The wonder of this Majesty in misery can be described in four words. The first wonder is that, under all this torture, our Lord was so patient. Not a flush of anger appeared on His cheek, not a flash of wrath from His eyes. He bore it all, bore it in His very soul, with Diving Patience, the very patience of the God of Patience.  
The next wonder is that He was silent under all this crueltynot a word did He utter either in complaint or in condemnation of His assailants. This proved His true greatness. Eloquence is easy compared with silence and, perhaps, it would not have been true of Christ that never man spoke like this Man, if it had not also been true of Him that never man was silent like this Man. He fulfilled to the letter the ancient prophecy, He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth. Lord, teach us how to imitate Your patience and Your silence!   
Notice, in the third place, how eloquent He was by that very silence. He said more for us, and more to us, by holding His tongue than if He had delivered Himself of many burning sentences. It is matchless eloquence that is seen in the calm serenity of Christ in the presence of these cruel persecutors, in the forgiving Character of Christ under the most exasperating circumstances and in the patience of Christ under unparalleled sufferings!   
And yet again, I see something so triumphant in our Saviors griefs that, while I call Him patient, silent, and eloquent, I must also call Him victorious. His persecutors could not make Him give way to anger. They could not destroy His mercy. They could not slay His love. They could not cause Him to think of Himself. They could not make Him declare that He would go no further with His work of saving sinners, now that men began to scoff at Him, strike Him and despitefully use Him. No, the strongsouled Christ still perseveres in His merciful work, even as a mighty hunter pursues his game upon the mountain, leaping from crag to crag and cliff to cliff, defying danger and death that he may secure the creature on whose track he has gone. So, O mighty Christ, You did accomplish Your glorious purpose of love and mercy! You did lead captivity captive by suffering, to the bitter end, all that was inflicted upon You, even unto the death of the Cross!   
Thus have I tried to picture Majesty in misery, but I have not been able to describe either Christs Majesty or His misery as they deserve to be described. Meditate on them and pray the Spirit of God to give you such a sight of them as human nature, by itself, can never afford you!   
II. Now I pass on to notice, secondly, that my text seems to me to show us SIN AT ITS SPORT.  
All this sad scene represents what sin did when it had the opportunitywhen all restraining bands were loosed and it could act according to its own evil will. It also represents what sin is still doing, as far as it can, and what would always be the action of sin if it were not hindered by the almighty power of God.   
What, then, does sin do in the hour of its liberty? I invite you to notice, firstand to pay particular attention to any part that may come home to yourselfthe levity of sin. These men are grossly insulting the Christ of God, but, to them, it is a sport, a game. They play at blindfolding Himit is simply mirth and amusement to them. Sad, indeed, is it that sin should ever be what men call sport, yet I need scarcely remind you how often it is so, even now, to many. They run after it with the utmost eagerness and they call it pleasurethey call that which is provoking God pleasurethey call that which crucified Christ pleasure! They say that they must see life, and they call that, life, which forced from Jesus a bloody sweat and which afterwards dragged Him to a cruel death! And, alas, they say of many a sin, What a delight it is to us! Would you make our life miserable by taking away our enjoyments? So it becomes a matter of enjoyment to them to strike Christ on the face and to mock Him! Perhaps I am addressing some who have even made the Bible into a jestbooktheir puns and mirth have been pointed with passages of Holy Writ. Possibly others have made rare fun out of some venerable Christian, some faithful servant of the living and true God. Well, Sirs, if you have done so, I would have you know how heinous is your sin in thus making sport of the godlysuch sport as that, unless you repent of it, will damn you forever! As surely as you live, it will shut you out from the great Fathers love and close the door of Mercy against you, world without end! Yet that is how sin acts when it has its liberty. Yes, and it sports even with the wounds of a Crucified God! Alas, that it should ever do so!

Notice, next, the utter wantonness of sin. If these men really wanted to get amusement out of Christ, they were able to get it, but what need was there for them to also strike Him? What need was there of all that superfluity of cruelty by which they put Him to such shame and pain? If Christ must die, at least let Him die in peacewhy that spitting in His face, that terrible scourging, that awful aggravation of His griefs? It was because men will sin out of sheer wantonness! I have known some persons sin in such strange ways that I have wondered why they did it. It was not for pleasureat least I could not see any pleasure in it. It caused the mans own family to be utterly miserable and brought them and himself, too, down to povertywhat mirth or merriment could there be in that? There are some who seem as if they could never be happy unless they were engaged in making themselves unhappy forever and ever. They are not content without committing some extravagance in sin and making their whole lives an outrageous series of rebellions against God. If any of you have ever been guilty of such wantonness in sin, may the Holy Spirit cause a gracious influence to steal over you so that you will no longer grieve the Christ of God, but will, yourself, grieve that you should ever have sinned so shamefully against Him!   
Then note, next, the cruelty of sin. I have already asked and I repeat the questionWhat need was there for these men to strike the Savior? What pleasure could they derive from all the pain they caused Him? By the mouth of His ancient Prophets, the Lord said, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate! It was in their own interests that He thus pleaded with men, for He would not have them injure themselvesand sin is always self-injuryit is a sort of suicide. Whenever a man does wrong, mischief must certainly come of it, and God knows this, so He beseeches men not to act so foolishly. And, oh, when a man mocks at true religion, rejects Christ and postpones the day of repentance, He is piercing again that dear heart that bled for the unworthy, and grieving that blessed Spirit who still strives with the sons of men, though He is often vexed and grievously provoked by them. Why are you so unkind to your God? Surely, there can be no necessity for committing such a sin as this!   
Then, observe the desperate unbelief that there often is in sin. These men would not have blindfolded Christ if they had really believed Him to be the Son of God. They acted as they did because they had no faith whatever in Him. This is the great evil that lies at the root of most mens sinsthey believe not in Jesus Christ whom God has sent. It is this of which the Spirit of God convinces men, as our Savior foretold concerning HimHe will convince the world of sin...because they believe not on Me. Yet there is nothing more reasonable, nothing more worthy to be believed, than the Revelation of God as given to us in the Holy Scriptures! A man has only to test and try for himself whether it is true, or not, and he shall soon have the proof of its verity in his own bosom. Let him really believe it and then see whether it does not make him both holy and happythat shall be to him the test of its truth.   
Notice, again, how often there is in sin a kind of defiance of God. If a boy were to come to his father and were to say to him, I will do all manner of rude and unkind things to you, yet you will not chastise me, it would not be long before that father would make his son smart if he were, himself, worthy to be a father! But sinners act towards God in that kind of way. They often do to God what these persecutors did to Christ, as far as they can. They mock Him, strike Him and defy Him. Am I addressing anyone who has ever called down upon himself the curse of God? Beware lest that blasphemous prayer of yours be answered the next time you utter it, for it is Gods way to answer prayer and, perhaps, He will answer yoursand then where will you be? Some have even dared to defy God thusWell, even if it is as you say, I am willing to take my chancesI will not submit to God. Ah, Sir, Pharaoh tried that plan and he repented of it, I think, when it was too late! In the midst of the Red Sea, when the waters began to overwhelm him and all his mighty host, then he learned what were the consequences of saying, Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? Every sin has in it a measure of defiance of Godit is like these men striking Christ upon the face and saying to HimProphesy, who is it that struck You?   
I will not linger longer upon this part of my theme except just to say that there is one more thing about sin that is peculiarly lamentable, namely, the multiplicity of sin. Read the 65th verseAnd many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him. One thing, two things, 20 things will not content themthey must say many other things against Him! When a man once gives himself up to sin, it is like getting into a current which bears him onward where, at first, he had no thought of going. If you wade into the waters of sin, it will not be long that you will be able to retain a foothold and, by-and-by, unless the Lord shall, in His Grace, prevent such a calamity, the rapid current will bear you away to your everlasting destruction! It is no use for you to say, This far will I go in sin, but no farther. You cannot stop when you pleaseif you once commit yourself to the influence of sin, you know not where it will carry you. Alas, alas, some men seem as if they never could sin enough to satisfy themselves! They multiply their transgressions beyond all count. Every iron of iniquity that they have is thrust into the fire. Both hands are diligently engaged in doing mischief. Sometimes they rise up early, but, more often, they sit up latepossibly all through the night, that they may waste the more precious hours in their wickedness! So God is grieved and Christ is wounded afresh by the sin of man. It is a sad, sad picture. I cast a veil over it and turn to something brighter and better.   
III. We have seen Majesty in misery, and sin at its sport. Now, thirdly, let us see LOVE AT ITS LABOR.   
All that shame and suffering was endured by our Savior for love of each of us who can truly say, He loved me, and gave Himself for me. All this blindfolding, mocking, and striking was borne by Christ for your sake, Beloved, and mine. I will not try to describe it further, but I will ask you to just spend a minute or two in trying to realize that sad scene. For youas much as if there were no other person in the whole universefor you the King of Glory became the King of Scorn and bore all this despising and rejection of men! For you, John. For you, Mary. For you, old friend. For you, in your youth. If you, whoever you are, believe in Him, He was your Substitute. Your faith gives you the assurance that He was enduring all this for youfor you, I say, as much as if He had no other redeemed one, but had paid the ransom price all for you. Less than this would not have sufficed for you, though it is, indeed, sufficient for all the innumerable host redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus!   
Let us, then, see love at its labor. I mean, our love to our Lord, though I might also speak of our Lords love to us, and what it did for us. What shall our love do to show how grateful we are to Jesus for all that He endured for us? Well, first, let it set penitence to confess. Come, my Heart, here is room for the display of your grief. Why was Christ mocked in Jerusalem? Surely it was because you have mocked God with prayers that were no prayers, with hymns carelessly sung, with Scripture read as if they were merely the writings of men, with professions of religion that were hollow and empty! Brothers and Sisters, have you not some of these things to repent of? If you have mocked Him thus, the mocking that He endured in the hall of the high priest was on your account.  
And as He was blindfolded, let us weep because our unbelief has often blindfolded Him. We imagined that He did not know about us, or that He had forgotten us. We thought that He could not see the end from the beginning and that He would not be able to bring good out of evil. Let me ask you, dear Friendshave you not often made Christ to be a blindfolded Christ so far as your apprehension of Him was concerned? If so, because you have thus blindfolded God by your unbelief, you are, by your sin, imitating the guilt of these men who literally blindfolded Christ.   
And as we behold Him struck, let us again grieve as we remember how it was written of Him, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. Every sin that we have ever committed made a gory furrow upon His precious back! Those black and blue bruises that alternate upon His sacred shoulders were caused by the cruel scourging to which each of us contributed our share by our transgressions. O Beloved, weep as you see Him bearing what you ought to have borne!   
And when you read that they asked Him taunting questions while His eyes were blindfolded, ask yourself, O child of God, whether you have not often done the same! Have you never asked for a sign, instead of walking by faith? I confess that I have sometimes wished that I could have some token or indication of what my Lord thought. Ah, that is what these cruel men sought from Christthey tried to get Him to convince them that He knew them when His eyes were blinded. O Brothers and Sisters, let us never seek a sign as that wicked and adulterous generation did! Let us walk by faith, not by sight, and implicitly trust our Lord! Because we have not trusted Him as we should have done, but have demanded of Him signs and tokens, we have been too much like these men who asked Him, Prophesy, who is it that struck You?   
I said that we would see love at its labor, so I want you, next, to let your love urge faith to confide in Christ. Come, dear Friends, in all this suffering of our Savior, let us see fresh reasons for trusting ourselves more entirely in the hands of Christ. Those men held Jesus in order that neither death nor Hell might ever be able to hold us. He was held in our place, so He says concerning us, as He said concerning His disciples in the garden, If, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way. The great Substitute is held as a prisoner so that all for whom He stood as Surety might be set at liberty forever!

He also was mocked. And to what end? We deserve eternal shame and contempt because of our sin, but He took all that shame upon Himself and made this wonderful exchange. As He put on the rags of our shame, He said to us, Take My glittering vesture and wear it! And now, the Glory which He had with the Father from eternity, He has put upon His people, that they may be like He and may be with Him where He is forever and ever! What a wonderful exchange is this! As Thomas read the Deity of Christ in His wounds, so do I read the eternal glory of His people in the mockery which He endured on their behalf.   
When you see your Lord struck, why is that but that there may be no striking and no wounds for you, now or forever? You shall go free, for Jesus has borne all that you deserved to bear! He bore blow after blow that not one might ever fall upon you.   
Why, too, was Jesus blindfolded but that we might be able to see? Our sin had blinded us to all that was worth seeing, but His death has taken away the scales and we can now see because He was caused not to see. Because He suffered these miserable miscreants to bind His eyes, therefore are our eyes unbound, today, and they shall be yet more unbound in that day when we shall behold Him face to face and be no more parted from Him.   
And why was Jesus blasphemed by the many other things which they falsely laid to His charge? He was blasphemed that we might be justified! He was unrighteously accused and slandered in order that we might be able to boldly say, Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died. Therefore, be glad, Belovedwhile you sorrow over your Lords griefs, rejoice over what those griefs have brought to you and what they will continue to bring to you throughout eternity!   
Now, lastly, let our love at its labor awaken our zeal to consecration to our Lord. Was He held captive? Then come, my most burning zeal, and inflame me with devotion to His cause! Was He held thus for me? Then He shall hold me fast and never let me go! My Lord, I do surrender myself, my life, my all, to You, to be Your willing captive forever! Take these eyes, these lips, these hands, these feet, this heartand as you were and are altogether mine, so let me be altogether Yours. Is not this a fair requital? Does any child of God object to that?   
Then, next, as they despised Him, come, my Soul, what do you say to this? Why, that I will despise the world that did despise my Lord and Savior! O world, world, world, you are a blind, blear-eyed, black-hearted thing to have treated my Master so! Shall I conform to your customs? Shall I flatter you? Shall I ask for your applause? No, you are crucified to me. As a felon nailed up to the cross, so, O world, are you to me because you have crucified the Christ, the infinitely-lovely Son of God! Henceforth, the world is crucified to us and we to the world!   
And as they blindfolded Jesus, what then? Why, I will be blindfolded, too! I will henceforth see no charm, no attraction anywhere but in my Lord. My eyes shall behold Him and no other in the glory that is yet to be revealed and, today, I can say with the Psalmist, Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire but You. Go through the world, Beloved, blindfolded to all but Christ, and you shall do well!   
And, as they struck Jesus on the face, what will you and I do to show how much we love that face which was so shamefully ill-treated? My heart brings up before me a vision of that sacred head, once wounded, encircled by the crown of thornsthat dear face, so bruised and battered, yet even then more beautiful than all the other loveliness of Heaven besides! Jesus, Son of God, and Son of Man, we adore You and we hasten to kiss those blessed feet of Yours, in loving adoration, and we do it all the more because wicked men did strike You upon the cheek! Reverence and love we gladly give to Him who once was struck by outcasts and who afterwards was nailed to the accursed tree!  
And, inasmuch as these men said many other things blasphemously against Him, come, my Brothers, let us say many things in His praise! And, Sisters, join us in the holy exercise! No one shall close our lips, faulty as they are, from speaking in honor of our dear Lord! Sometimes, with the Prophet, we are ready to confess that we are men of unclean lips and that we dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips, but, such as we are, we will render to Him the calves of our lips and give glory to His holy name! Never be ashamed to speak up for your Lord, Beloved. Never blush to acknowledge that you belong to Him. No, if you blush at all, blush with shame that you do not love Him more and serve Him better! By the memory of that dear face, blindfolded and struck, while cruel men all around slander Him with their blasphemous accusations, I charge you to   
*Stand up, stand up for Jesus,   
You soldiers of the Cross!*   
God help you to do so!   
Oh, that some here who have never believed in Jesus Christ would now begin to trust Him! I do not invite you, just now, so much to believe in Him in His glory as to believe in Him in His shame. Was He really the Son of God and did He suffer for guilty men all that we have been talking of, and far more than that? Then I must believe in Him! To me, Jesus Christ seems to be a Character that men could never have invented. He must be historical for He is so original. Unaided human minds could never have thought out such a Character! There are strange things in Buddhism and other false religions, and men with wild imaginations have conceived curious notions concerning their gods, but I challenge anyone to show me, in any book except Gods Book, anything that can parallel the story of the Eternal God, Himself, becoming Man in order to make atonement for the sins of His creatures, that is, the sins committed by them against Him. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, I must believe in Him! What is more, I must believe that He died for me   
*That on the Cross He shed His blood   
From sin to set me free.*   
Having so believedI speak as Gods witness to all who can hear me I feel an inward peace that nothing can break, a holy joy that nothing can disturb and a sacred calm which death, itself, shall not be able to destroy. I have been at the deathbeds of many of our Brothers and Sisters who have been accustomed to worship here and who have been members of this Church. Andnote this testimony, I pray youI have never seen one of them afraid to die! I have not met with one coward among them all! But I have heard some of them singing triumphantly in their last hours, as merrily as though it were their marriage daywhile others have been as calm and quiet as if to die were but to go to bed, sleep a while and wake again in the morning!   
Believe in the Lord Jesus Christin this very Lord who stooped from the heights of Glory to the depths of shame and sufferingand you, also, shall find that your confidence in Him shall be rewarded even in this life! While, as for the world to comeah then, when there shall be no blindfolded eyes for Himno mockery and scorn and smiting for Himbut all shall be Glory forever and ever, then you and I, if we are believers in Him, shall eternally share His Glory! God grant it, for Jesus Christs 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 #2051 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SETTING JESUS AT NOTHINGTREATING HIM WITH CONTEMPT   
NO. 2051

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1888.   
**And Herod with his men of war set Him at nothing. Luke 23:11.**

IT is your Lord whom Herod set at nothing! Once worshipped of angels and all the heavenly host, He is treated with contempt by a ribald regiment. In Himself the brightness of His Fathers glory and the express image of His Person. But now set at nothing by men not worthy of the name. Soon to reassume all His former glory with the Father and to descend in infinite splendor to judge the earth in righteousness and reign as King of kingsand yet here He is set at nothing! It is a sight of horror and of shame. How could angels bear to see it? This paltry prince and his rough retinue made nothing of Him who is All in All. They treated Him as beneath their contempt.

The most contemptible flouted Him. The mean soldier in the petty army of a petty prince made unholy mirth of Heavens high Lord and earths Redeemer. What a sorrowful and shameless business! May we be helped to sorrow over it! These wretches were of our race. May we mourn because of Him! When the thorns of grief and repentance are at our breast, may God grant that they may act as lancets to let out the foul blood of our pride, for we, too, are partakers in this tremendous crime, since our sin involved our Savior in the necessity of bearing this barbarous scorn.

Herod himself treated Him with contempt. In this loathsome being I see the most likely person to think nothing of the Lord Jesus. Let me just say a word or two about this member of a detestable family, that I may see whether his like can be found here tonight. I will not give you any history of this Herod. It is not worth while. This fox is not worth unearthing. The page of history is stained by the Herodian name. I will give you enough concerning him to help you to answer the questionAre you like he? Have you set Christ at nothing? Have you treated Christ with contempt?

I. This shall be our first enquiryWHO IS THE MOST LIKELY PERSON TO TREAT OUR LORD WITH CONTEMPT?   
Herod was a man who had once heard the Word of God. Yes, heard it with a measure of attention and apparent benefit. We read, Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy and observed him. And when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly. According to the margin, Herod kept him or saved himpreserving him from those who would have laid violent hands upon him. But he broke away from his respectful regard of John and now that Jesus stands before him, his memory of the Baptist does not restrain him from mocking the Baptists Lord. He had silenced that eloquent tongue and now he had no care to listen to anything which might further bestir his conscience.

We often find that the greatest despisers of Christ are those who formerly were hearers and readers of His Word but have turned from it. An apostate Methodist is a scoffera runaway Baptist is an infidel. It looks as if men must have some knowledge of the Truth of God to be able to fight against it in the most malicious way. The viper must be warmed in the mans bosom that he may have strength to bite him. Is not this a wretched business? Am I talking to any here who not so many years ago were regular attendants upon a faithful ministry but who have grown weary of it and given it up? I do not know what reason you give. But I suppose the real reason is that you love the world better than Christ and so you have left His people and His Word.  
It troubles your conscience that you have done so and now you try to conceal your uneasiness by picking holes in your former minister and finding fault with the Truths of God which he preached to you. I know the tricks and manners of apostates. Wanting an opiate for your consciences, you invent a fault in the Gospel, or try to disbelieve it altogether. What an unhappy thing that the hopeful hearer should decline into a hopeless despiser! Herod heard John but he ridiculed Jesus. See to what unconverted hearers may come?   
If I look at Herod again, I see in him a man who, after hearing the Word faithfully preached, had distinctly done violence to his conscience. He heard John until John came home to him about the woman with whom he was living in an incestuous union. Herodias would have killed John at onceand though Herod did not dare to go so far as that, he shut him up in prison. A filthy lust must not be rebukedHerod imprisons his reprover. He knew that John was right and he trembled at his rebuke. But he could not give up his sin and so he put the servant of God in a dungeon. He was held fast, as many a man before, and since has been held fast, by an evil woman.   
She demanded of him that at the very least the man of God should be cast into prison. How dare he speak against what the prince chose to do! How dare a peasant censure so great a man as Herod about his personal life! So, instead of bowing before the supreme authority of right and listening to the voice of truth as uttered by the Lords Elijah, he must exercise his royal power and lay his reprover by the heels. The man who could do this was in training for the more daring act of setting the Lord Jesus at nothing.   
First despise the man, and then the Master. First do violence to your better self and then scoff at godliness. My Friend, do you remember that night when you distinctly decided for the devil? Do you recollect when, after having the evil set before you and seeing it and counting the cost, you decided to continue in it? Then you turned with bitterness upon the honest reprover whose rebuke you had aforetime endured. Perhaps it was your wife upon whom you turned with anger. What hard words you said to her for the gentle remark she ventured to make! It was an effort for you. You gave conscience an awful wrench. And therefore you put yourself into a passion and talked like an insulted man.  
Or was it your brother? It may be you left his society in order to be free from his remarks. Was it your child, or your friend? You could not put them in prison. But you were determined that you would not bear any more of their protests. You abused and silenced them. Not because you thought they were wrong, but because they made you feel that you were wrong. By all this you have prepared yourself to treat the Lord with contempt. And we cannot wonder that you do so.   
This man also had yielded to sinful companions and had committed a gross sin as the result of it, for when Herodias danced and he promised to give her whatsoever she desired, she asked the head of John the Baptist on a platter. And he, not liking to break his word in the presence of the assembled guests and not willing to stand out against the woman with whom he lived in unhallowed intercourse, yielded and the Baptists head was taken from his shoulders. Ah, well, you may not have sinned quite in that way. But you, too, once had better thoughts and higher aims. Your companions were too many for you and drove all good out of you.   
I do not mention this that you may dare to cast the blame upon others of that which was really your own act and deed. If there had been a spark of true manhood in you, you would have resisted the suggestion of those enemies in the garb of friends. But you are soft and plastic, like wax, in the hand of evil. Instead of being as you ought to be, like granite towards evil and like wax towards good you now feel as if you had gone too far to turn back. You are now fixed in an evil estate. A black sin seems to bar the way to repentance. Truly, even now, you will be welcomed to the bosom of mercy, but you are not anxious enough for it. It is a long lane that has no turning, but you seem to have got into such a lane and you are driven along it by evil forces.   
This is the man that thinks nothing of Christthe man who thinks so much of drinking and dancing and of the companions which such things have brought around him. Of course he does not think anything of Christ, for His ways would take from him these vile associates. How should he value the holy Jesus? Will swine ever think much of pearls? It is vain that we set before you beauties for which you have no eyes, hopes for which you have no heart. Jesus cannot be valued by a man of Herods sort, who puts so high a value upon the opinion of those who sit with him at his banquets.   
Once morethe man who thinks nothing of Christ is the man that means to go on in sin, even as Herod did. The die was casthis mind was made up for evil. He would be very glad to hear Christhe has no objection, still, to go to a place of worship and listen to a preacher. He would be very pleased to see a miraclehe would join in a revival, for he would be glad to enjoy something sensationalbut he does not mean to give up the sin in which he lives, nor the company which eggs him on in it. He does not mean to cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye. Not he! He is too fond of the vice, too much ensnared by his passions.   
And so, as he gives his heart to his lust, he takes away his heart from Christ. No, he treats religion with derision, because it is opposed to his bent and inclination. What a sad thing! I generally find when man speaks against the Lord Jesus, that if you follow him home he would rather not have you go indoors for fear his inner life should be known. He does not want you to see the skeleton in the closet. I have so often met with this fact in actual life that when I have heard a man speak bitterly of my Master, I have formed my opinion and have not been wrong. A little enquiry has revealed so much that I have said, It is not at all surprising that such a man should speak evil of Christ. It is as natural to such a man to talk against Christ as for a dog to bark.   
When a bad fellow once praised Socrates, that philosopher said, I wonder what I can have been doing amiss, that such a man should speak well of me. If lustful lips praised the Savior, one might begin to be afraid. But when they denounce and deride Him, we feel that it is the only homage which vice can pay to Purity.   
This, then, is the man who sets Jesus at nothing. I wonder whether he is here tonight! Possibly it is a woman who is doing this. Women fall into precisely the same evils as men from their own side of the house and the same remarks apply to both sexes. You who once were hearers, you who once were impressed, you who did willful violence to conscience. You who persist in sin, you who are the slaves of evil company and dare not do right for the life of you, for fear of ridiculeyou are the kind of people of whom Herod was a sad specimenyou set Jesus at nothing. You treat my Master in contempt.   
II. Having tried to find out Herod, let us now answer a second questionON WHAT GROUND DID HE TREAT OUR LORD WITH CONTEMPT?   
Men have some reason or other for their acts, although often those reasons are most unreasonable. Before we consider the unhallowed reasons for this great crime, let us do homage to the name of the Son of God. O Lord Jesus, even in Your lowest humiliation You are worthy of all reverence. To Your friends You are all the more dear and the more honored because You were greatly despised. You, bound and brought a prisoner before the tetrarch, are free to rule our hearts. You were charged with sedition but we fall at Your blessed feet and proclaim You King of kings!  
Herod sets Him up as the butt of his ridicule and makes nothing of Him. As Herbert puts it  
*Herod and all his bands do set Me light,   
Who teach all hands to war, fingers to fight, And only the Lord of Hosts and might.   
Was ever grief like Mine?*   
I suppose that part of the reason why he and his men of war made nothing of our Lord was because of His gentleness and patience. Our Lord had no sword and none of the temper of men who wear weapons. His visage was not like the face of a man of warit was marred with grief but not with anger. Worn with sorrow but not with battle. He was the lamb and not the lion, the dove and not the eagle and therefore the fighting men despised Him.   
If he had any weapons they were His tears and His almighty love. But these the Herodian ruffians utterly despised. All unarmed He stood before them and when He was reviled He reviled not again. You know how men of muscular strength and physical bravado value men by their muscles and bones and think nothing of those who are feeble in arm and body. The Savior, in His emaciation and faintness, must have seemed a poor creature to these ruffians. The Christian religion teaches us to be meek and gentle, to forgive injuries and even to give up our own rights rather than to inflict wrong.   
Such precepts savor of cowardice to the blustering world. Nonresistance they cannot hear of. They do not like the word Forgive. Surely, they say, a worm will turn? Thus they think so little of Christ that they prefer an earthworms example to that of the Lord. The sweet savor of gentle forbearance, which the spirit of Jesus breathes into the hearts of His people, is held in contempt by many. They call it cant and hypocrisy because it is so alien to their nature, so inconsistent with their ideas of manly conduct.

Furthermore, our Lord was ridiculed by Herod because He refused to gratify his curiosity and amuse his love of sensation. The wicked Herod virtually said to the holy Jesus, Come, work us a miracle. We hear that you did deliver from death, now release yourself from our hands. We hear that you did multiply loaves and fishes and feed multitudes. Give us a banquet here. You can do all things, so reports say of Youcome, do some little thing that we may see and believe. Did not Moses work miracles before Pharaoh? Work a miracle before us.   
There stands our Lord, with all power in His hands but He will not lift a finger for His own deliverance and Herods amusement. O blessed Jesus, it is the same still, You will not dazzle nor amuse and therefore men prefer any charlatan to You. Herod then begins to question Him. He asks Him this and that and the other, with many a jest rolled in between. But he receives no answer. He who answered blind beggars when they cried for mercy is silent to a prince who only seeks to gratify his own irreverent curiosity. Then the men-at-arms laugh at their silent victim. Why, they say, the man is dumb. Either He can say nothing for Himself, or He is obstinate and ill-mannered. He speaks not when He is spoken to. Has He lost His wits?   
Thereupon they multiply their profane jests and make nothing of the silent One. I do not doubt that often men turn away from the faith because their curiosity is not gratified and they see nothing marvelous in it. A Gospel for the age! A brand new Gospel every year might suit them. But the old is stalethey know all about it and sneer at it. Plain Gospel is too plain for them. They desire adornment, or at least mystery and the pomp which veils the unknown. They would rather go where there are gorgeous ceremonies and mutterings in an unknown tongue amid the smoke of incense and the harmony of music. The simple Gospel of, Believe and live, does not suit them. For it seems fit only for the poor and uneducated thus they treat Jesus with contempt.   
Moreover, the royal claims of Jesus excited their scorn. I think I hear the Aha! Aha! Aha! of Herod as he said, Call Him a King? You could find such kings as this in every street of Jerusalem. Talk of a kingdom for Him! Go to the pool of Bethesda and fetch up some poor wretch who lies waiting there for the moving of the water and call him a king! King? What hosts are at Your command? What kingdom do You govern? What laws can You make? Here! Put the white robe upon Him. Let Him at least look like a monarch. Yes, that old robe will do! Is He not every inch a King?   
Then the soldiery took up the jest! How bitterly, how derisively did they make His royalty the football of contempt! Thus today the world makes nothing of the royalty of King Jesus. A nominal king He may be but as a real king they will not have Him. Those who would be in the dust before the mean prince have no esteem for Him. There is no pomp about the pure religion of Jesus. There is no glory of philosophy about His teaching. And so they set Him and His cause at nothing. Ah, me, what will a rebellious people do in the day when He appears to claim His throne and punish sedition?   
Then, too, they denied His prophetic office. Look! said Herod, He will not speak. I have asked Him twenty questions and He will not answer one of them. This is a pretty Prophet! John was the voice of one crying in the wilderness but this man has no voice at all. A dumb Prophet! Why, He is mute as a fish and has nothing to say for Himself. With such unhallowed merriment did Herod and his men of war treat the Lord with contempt. How they provoked Him! But He stands in the majesty of His selfgovernment, quiet to the end. Here was an Omnipotence which restrained the lips of Omnipotence. It was a wondrous power, that God-like patience which enabled indignant Holiness to withhold its word of condemnation.   
The Prophet proved His commission by His silence. And yet He provoked their scorn, so that they set Him at nothing. At this time, because the Christian faith is silent upon a great many questions, certain men deride it. When men come to it with captious questions they receive no answer and they are irritated thereby. When they idly demand a miracle and it does not yield to their desires, they have fresh jeers for it. You preach up the faith of Christ as the only true and Divine religionlet us see it work wonders. Where are your miracles? We have asked you fifty questions about the past and the future and you do not reply. Where is the ground for your boastings? Thus they make nothing of Christ and disdain His claim to teach with authority.   
Those, I suppose, were the grounds upon which Herod and such as Herod, make light of Christ. Poor grounds they are, and such as will fail to justify them before the bar of God.   
III. Now, dear Friends, let us considerDO MEN NOW SET OUR LORD AT NOTHING? DO MEN NOW TREAT OUR LORD WITH CONTEMPT?   
Herod is dead and buried and there is no sort of reason why we should not let him rot into oblivion. I therefore speak to you and try to discover whether you are setting Christ at nothing. Are you treating our Lord with contempt? I fear there are such. Who are they?   
Some set Him at nothing for they will not even consider His claims. Oh, they say, we have plenty else to think about besides religion. What is there in it which will fill our pockets? There is nothing at all in it worth a moments attention. How do they know? They do not know. Nothing in it? God gives His own Son to die for guilty men and there is nothing in it? The highest thoughts of God are set forth in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and you do not think it worth while even to consider what God has therein revealed?  
A man goes to a bookstall and turns over a book. It is a novelhe reads a page and would like to buy it. But suppose it is a book upon the glories of Christ. Does he read, then? Does he wish to buy it? No. It is one of those dry theological books and he shuts it up. He will make no bid for a volume on so dull a subject. He would like to know of Alexander the Great or even of Tom Thumb but for the worlds Redeemer he cares nothing. He makes nothing of Christhe treats our Lord with contempt.   
Do I not convict some here present tonight? They have never set apart one solitary hour in their lives to the honest and candid consideration of the claims of Jesus, the Divine Savior. If it is so, you have, indeed, made Christ very cheap. And if you perish for lack of Him, your blood is on your own heads! If this is the medicine that will heal your disease, and you huff at it, and will not even hear of the cures it has worked, who is to blame if you perish? Who is to save the man who will not listen when salvation is put before him? Yet the great mass of our fellow citizens are of this kind.   
In London there are millions who make so little of Christ that they will not even come to hear what His ministers have to say about Him, nor read their Bibles, nor show the least interest in the matter. In many a house in London, Mahomet is practically as much esteemed as Jesus. Ah me,   
There are many others who prefer their business to Jesus. They would not mind giving some little attention to the Lord Jesus but then they are too busy just now. They say that they really cannot afford the time. O my busy Hearer! You will have to find time to die before longwhy not think of that solemn certainty? You are very busy and yet you find time to eat. Have you no time to feed your soul? You find time to put on your dress, have you no time to dress your souls? You seek out the surgeon when you are ill. Have you no time to seek out a Savior for your sin-sick soul? Ah, it is not thatyou have the time but you have not the heart.   
Others prefer amusements to the Lord Jesus. Well, says one, we must have recreation. In my spare time I like a game. I know that. I am not for denying you healthy recreation but everything should be in order and I claim first place for Jesus Christ and His salvation. What? Is it not worth while to give up a sport to seek Jesus? Do you think a game of cards more important than seeking the pardon of your sin? An evening at the theater or the music halldo you really think so little of Jesus that you can live without Him and satisfy your mind with these poor things? Can you suffer the paltry amusements of the world to stand before the Lord Jesus?   
Yet it is so with some of youI wish it were not. My Masters blood and righteousness, the salvation of a soul from Hell, the preparing of a heart for Heaventhese are laid away in the lumber-roomto allow the childish pleasures of a vain world to engross your thoughts. You will know better one day. God grant you may learn wisdom while yet it may be of use to you. Too late! What awful words! May you even now feel that if the Son of God has lived and died for men, it is of the first importance that you put business and pleasure in their proper places and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.   
Another sort of persons make nothing of Christ because they profess to see nothing profound and philosophical in the faith which He has revealed. These are the Greeks, to whom the doctrine of the Cross is foolishness. O foolish Greeks! These wise men will not hear some of us because we can be understood by the people. Anybody can understand you, they say, you speak after the manner of the crowd and what you say is simple enough to be clear to the most ignorant. We like something deeper, something too profound to be readily grasped. We are above commonplace people and need something more intellectual and philosophical.   
A man of note once said to me, Why do you keep on preaching to those thousands at Newington? Preach so that the mob will leave you and the elite will support you. To whom I answered that if one mans soul was of less value than another, his was of the least value who could talk so slightingly of others. Those who make no pretense to culture are often far more sensible people than those who affect superiority. The man who thinks that he is intellectual and talks in that fashion is a miserable snob, and has scarcely a soul at all.

When a man despises the multitude, he deserves to be despised himself. But, my dear Sir, if the salvation of Christ is very simple and very plain, is it not so much the better? Have you not enough of philanthropy to make you feel that if you could have a Gospel only for the elite, it would be a matter of deep regret? Is not a Gospel for the multitude the thing to be desired? Do you not desire the vast mass to be saved? I hope you do. But I fear you make nothing of Christ when you despise His Gospel because you imagine that it is not deep enough and philosophical enough for you. The most profound science in the world is the science of the Cross! Christ Himself is the highest wisdom, for He is the wisdom of God.   
Others treat Christ with contempt because they confide in themselves. They think themselves quite good enough without a Savior. If they are not quite perfect, they believe that they can make themselves so and be saved without an atoning sacrifice, or a new heart, or union to Christ. They are doing their best and they make no doubt, whatever, that they will find their way to Heaven as well as others. Do you thus think? You are in grave error.   
There was a learned Romanist who once ventured to say that if salvation could only be had on terms of Free Grace, he would not have it. Do you know what happened? Why, he did not have itthat was all. And that is what will happen to youif you will not have salvation as a free gift of Divine Grace, without any merit wherewith to purchase itthen you must go without it and perish in your sin. For the terms of Free Grace will never be altered to suit the pride of the human heart.   
If any man sets up his righteousness in the place of Jesus Christ, the sin-removing Lamb, why then he has made nothing of Christ and the Lord will make less than nothing of him. Alas, that any man should be so profane as to think himself so good that he does not need Gods Grace and the atoning blood! Such pride treats the Lord Christ with contempt and will bring sure destruction upon the man who is guilty of it.   
I have no doubt that there are many, also, who treat Christ with contempt because they have no conscience whatever as to His present claims upon them. O dear Sirs, if you did but know His kindness to the sons of men, even to His enemies and how He sought them with His tears and then bought them with His blood, you would feel forced to love Him *Surely Christ deserves the noblest place   
In every human heart.*   
Truly know Jesus and you must love Him.   
But some men do not think that they owe Him anything, or are in any need of Him. It is nothing to such that He died, for they did not require His death to save themin their judgment they are not lost. Those who are of this mind will leave this Tabernacle tonight and will go back to the world just as they came in, practically saying, Whether Jesus lived or whether He died and whatever He did or was, I care nothing, for I owe Him nothing. And yet you owe Him everything. You had not been here tonight if it were not for the mercy which has spared you and which has come to you through Him. The axe would have had you down long ago but for His intercession.   
There had been no Gospel to set before you tonight if it had not been for the death agony of the Lord Jesus. You owe the very opportunity of hearing the Gospel and the opportunity of accepting it to His dying love. Oh, that you had a conscience which would make you just towards Jesus! Oh, that you felt that you were bound to love Him and live for Him, because of all that He has done for guilty men!   
As they have no conscience of His claims upon them, so many have no fears concerning the day of His appearing. Whether you believe it or not, Jesus, as your Judge, is at the door. He said, years ago, Behold, I am coming quickly. He is still coming and must soon arrive to commence the last dread session of justice. What matters it how many more years may elapse? They will fly like the wind. The day will come when Heaven and earth shall be ablaze. The thick darkness will lower down  
*And, withering from the vault of night,   
The stars shall pale their feeble light.*

The hour will come when the earth and sky will rock and reel and pass away, rolled up like a worn-out vesture. Then shall the trumpet ring out exceeding loud and longAwake, you dead and come to judgment! How will you endure that voice which shall disturb the stillness of the sepulcher? Come to judgment! Come to judgment! Come to judgment! How it will peal forth! None of you will be able to resist the call. From your beds of dust you will start up amazed to a terrible awakening. From the sea, from the land, from the teeming cemetery, from the lonely grave, men will rise, and all of them stand before Christ!

In that day you will see nothing but the Great White Throne and Him that sits upon it. You will be unable to close your eyes, or to turn your gaze elsewhere. There will He sit and you will know Him by His scars

*How resplendent shine the nail-prints!*

*Every eye shall see Him move.*   
Still shall the trumpet thrill out the summons, Come to judgment! Come to judgment! Come away! And you must come, whether you will or not. And if you have despised the Lord as Savior, you will tremble before Him as Judge. You will then hear His voice, which in itself is sweeter than the harps of Heaven but to the ungodly it will be more full of thunder than the crash of tempestDepart! Depart! Depart!

O my Hearer, what will then become of you? The prospect is terrible but you have no concern about it. To die, to rise, to be judged, to be condemnedyou take no account of it. Like Herod, you set him at nothing. Like Herod, you treat Him with contempt. How dare you do so? How dare you despise the great Judge? Ah, my Lord, have mercy upon them! Have mercy upon them now and turn them from doing to You and to themselves this grievous wrong of making nothing of the Lord of All. They set Him at nothing!

This is very heavy preaching to me. If it is as painful to you to hear as to me to speak, you will be glad when I have done. I pray that these solemn words may long remain upon your hearts. Oh, that they might bring you to Jesus at once by the power of the Holy Spirit!

IV. But I close with thisWHAT DO BELIEVERS SAY ABOUT THEIR LORD? Herod made nothing of Himwhat do we make of Him? Well, we say, first, that we mourn and lament that there ever was a time when we ourselves made nothing of the glorious One. It is many years ago with some of us. But we cannot forget it, nor cease to bewail it. There were a certain number of years in our lives in which it was nothing to us that Jesus should die.

O my dear Hearers, perhaps some of you have been lately converted after forty, or fifty, or sixty years of sin. Repent with all your hearts that you were Herods so long. Christ has forgiven you. But can you forgive yourselves? No. I think that you still smite on your breast and say, Lord, I grieve that ever I lived a moment without acknowledging You as my Lord that I ever ate a meal or drew in a breath without bowing before You. Lord, bury those years in forgetfulness which we spent in forgetfulness of You!

Next, it is now our grief that any others should set the Lord Jesus at nothing. It must be a great grief to any man here if she who lies in his bosom treats the Lord with contempt. Dear woman, I know what your daily burden must be if the husband who is so dear to you does not love your Savior whom you love with a higher love. What an anguish it is to nourish and bring up children and see them refuse our Lord! I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the Truth. And no greater sorrow than to see them running into evil ways.

Could we really see the heart of an unregenerate man or woman it would cause us the utmost distress. If we felt as we ought to feel, if there were only one unconverted person in this Tabernacle, we should make a Bochim of it till that heart was yielded to Christ. If there existed only one man or woman who did not love the Savior. And if that person lived among the wilds of Siberia and it were necessary that all the millions of Believers on the face of the earth should journey there and plead with him to come to Jesus before he could be converted, it would be well worth all the zeal and labor and expense of all that effort.

One soul would repay the travail in birth of myriads of zealous Christians. Lord, we cannot bear it that there should go on existing men and women who make nothing of the bleeding Son of God! It is an awful thingas awful as Hell itself! Out in that street tonight think of the thousands who will be hunting for the precious life. Walk along our crowded thoroughfares and think of the myriads even of this city who live and die without God and without hope, making nothing of Jesus and you will feel a heartbreak which will make life a burden. I could wish that you felt that heartbreak for their sakes and for Christs sake.

But then, dear Friends, what do we make of Christ ourselves now? Well, that I cannot tell you, except it is in one wordChrist is All. Herod made nothing of Him. We make everything of Him

*All my spacious powers can wish,   
In You do richly meet;   
Nor to my eyes is light so dear,   
Nor friendship half so sweet.*

Could any of you who love my Lord tell me what you think of Him? I am sure that you would break down in the attempt. For my own part, I always fail in the glad endeavor

*When my tongue would hope to express   
All His love and loveliness,   
Then I lisp and falter forth   
Broken words not half His worth.*

If we could give every drop of our blood for Jesus. If we could be burnt at a slow fire for a century for Him, He deserves all our suffering and all our life. Could our zeal know no respite, a whole eternity of service would not adequately set forth what we think of Him.

I close with this practical thought. Sometimes Believers show their love and their appreciation of their Master by special acts of homage. Herod, you see, when he made nothing of Him, said, Here, bring out that glittering white robe of mine and put it on Him, that we may heap contempt upon Him. He calls Himself a King! Let us pay Him homage! They

mocked Him, and they put the robe upon Him and then sent Him back to Pilate. Now, I want you to imitate Herod in the opposite direction. Let us do our Lord special honor tonight. Let us crown Him. As soon as we have opportunity, let us make some special offering of our substance to His cause.

Let us set apart a season for adoration and reverent worship. Let us resolve that for His sake we will speak well of His name to somebody to whom we have not yet spoken. It may be that some of you can sing a hymn to Jesus with choice music, or write a glorious verse for His dear sake. Go, take your pen and dip it in your heart and write a fresh tract in honor of His blessed name. Herod set Him at nothing but let us set Him on high in our best manner. Set Him at the highest figure that your thought and your imagination can reach.

It may be that some Brother here could preach about his Lord and yet he has not opened his mouth from timidity. Come, try, my Friend. Shake off your bashfulness. It may be that some Sister here might teach women, or get together a class of youngsters and glorify Christ by instructing them. I long to undo what Herod did and pay the Well-Beloved a recompense for His shame. Oh, how would I honor Him! But what am I? What can one person do? Come, all of you, my Brethren, and help to cry Hosanna!

Alas, what are we all together? The music has no volume in it, compared with what He deserves. Come, all you saints and worship Him! And what are all the saints on earth? Come, you in Heaven, who bear the palm, redeemed, perfected and white-robed as you arecome, worship Him who washed your robes in His own blood! And what are all they? Even the armies of the redeemed suffice not. Come, all holy ones and praise Him

*Angels, assist our mighty joys!   
Strike all your harps of gold!   
But when you raise your highest notes,   
His love can never be told.*

Therefore do I summon all things that are to praise the Lord, without whom was not anything made. I charge all living things to adore Him who is the resurrection and the life. Let space become one great mouth for song. Let time unceasingly flow with hallelujahs. Let eternity become an orchestra to the praise of Jesus who was mocked of Herod and his men of war. Glory be to His name! Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Amen.

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OUR LORD BEFORE HEROD   
NO. 1645

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 19, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad: for he was desirous to see Him for a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him in many words; but He answered him nothing. Luke 23:8. 9.**

AFTER Pilate had declared to the chief priests and scribes that he found no fault at all in Jesus, they were afraid that their victim would escape and, therefore, their fury was raised to the highest pitch and they cried out the more vehemently against Him. In the course of their outcries they made use of the word, Galilee, going, as it seems to me, a little out of their way in order to drag in the nameHe stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. Galilee was a region held in very great contempt and they mentioned it to cast a slur upon our Lord, as if He were a mere boor from among the clowns of Galilee. To Pilate, they thought that the mention of the name would, perhaps, act like the proverbial red rag held before an infuriated bull, for he appears to have been troubled by seditious persons from that province.

We all remember that they were Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. The Galileans were reputed to be an ignorant people, apt to be led astray by impostors and so enthusiastic that they ventured their lives against the Romans. The priests would not only cast contempt upon Jesus, whom they were known to call the Galilean, but also excite the prejudices of Pilate, so that he might condemn Him to die as one of a nest of rebels. They were mistaken, however, in the consequences of their device, for Pilate caught at the word, Galilee, directly. That province was not immediately under his ruleit was under the sway of the tetrarch Herod Antipas and, therefore, he thought within himself, I can kill two birds with one stoneI can get rid of this troublesome business by sending this prisoner to Herodand I can also greatly gratify the king by showing him this attention.

Pilate had quarreled with Herod and now, for some purpose of his own, he resolved to patch up a friendship by pretending great deference to his sovereign powers by sending one of his subjects to be tried by him. Pilate, therefore, asked, Is this man a Galilean? and when they told him that He wasfor He was so by repute, His birth at Bethlehem having been willfully ignoredthen Pilate at once commanded that He be led to Herod, for Herod was in his palace at Jerusalem attending the Passover festival.

See, then, my Brothers and Sisters, our Divine Master conducted in His third march of sorrow through Jerusalem! First, He was led from the garden to the house of Annas; then He was conducted through the streets from the hall of Caiaphas to the judgment hall of Pilate. And now, by Pilates orders, He is led a third time by the angry crowd of priests through the streets to the palace of Herod, there to await His fourth examination! Certain of the old writers delight to remark that as there were four evangelists to do honor to our Lord, so were there four judges to do Him shame. Annas and Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod. We are on safer ground when we observe with the early Church the coalition of the heathen and the JewsFor of a truth against Your holy Child Jesus, whom You have anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatever Your hand and Your counsel determined before to be done.

This morning I shall endeavor to set forth this portion of the sad narrative under two heads, which will be theseHerod before Jesusand Jesus before Herod.

I. I call your attention, first, to HEROD BEFORE JESUS because you must know something of his character, something of the meaning of his questions, before you can rightly understand the sorrow which they caused Jesus, our Lord and Master. This Herod Antipas was the son of the old Herod the Great who had put to death the babes at Bethlehem in the hope of destroying the King of the Jews. He was a chip off the old block, but still, he was several degrees baser than his father. There was nothing of the grandeur of his father about him. There was the same evil disposition without the courage and the decision. He did not, in some things, out-Herod Herod, for in certain points he was a more despicable person. Herod the Great may be called a lion, but our Lord very descriptively called this lesser Herod a fox, saying, Go and tell this fox.

He was a man of dissolute habits and frivolous mind. He was very much under the sway of a wicked woman who destroyed any little good there might have been in him. He was a lover of pleasure, a lover of himself, depraved, weak and trifling to the last degree. I almost grudge to call him a man, therefore let him only be called a tetrarch. This petty tetrarch had once been the subject of religious impressions. These Herods all, more or less, felt the influence of religion at times, though they were by no means benefited thereby. The impressions made upon his conscience by John did not last with Herod. They were, at first, powerful and practical, for we are informed that, Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

I suppose he reformed many matters in his kingdom and cast off, perhaps, some of his grosser vices. But when, at last John began to denounce him for having taken his brothers wife to be his paramour, while yet the brother lived, he cast his reprover into prison. And then you remember how, with reluctance, Herod, to please his mistress, beheaded John in prison. Mark thisprobably there is no more dangerous character living than a man who has once come under religious influences so as to be materially affected by themand yet has broken loose and cast off all fear of God! He has done despite to his conscience so violently that from now on he will know few qualms.

In such a man is fulfilled the saying of our Lord, When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest and finds none. Then he says, I will return into my house from where I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept and garnished. Then goes he, and takes with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. The mind of Herod Antipas was in the condition of the chamber which has been swept and garnished, for his life had been somewhat reformed, but the unclean spirit with the terrible seven had come back to his old den and now he was a worse man by a great deal than he had ever been before. The dog returned to his vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

This Herod was an Idumaean, that is to say, one of the descendants of Esau, an Edomite, and though he had professedly become a Jew, yet the old blood was in him, as it is written concerning Edom, He did pursue his brother with the sword and cast off all pity. The true Jacob stood before one of the seed of Esau, a tetrarch, profane and worldly like his ancestorand scant was the pity which He received. Esau was descended from Abraham according to the flesh, but with Jacob was the Covenant according to the spiritit bodes no good to the spiritual seed when it comes, even for a moment, under the power of the carnal seed!

We see how the child of the flesh takes to mocking, while the child according to promise is called to patience. Herod was in such a state of mind that he furnishes me with a typical character which I would use for the instruction and admonition of you all. He is a type of some who frequently come to this Tabernacle and go to other places of worship, occasionally people who were once under religious impressions and cannot forget that they were sobut who will never be under any religious impressions again. They are now hardened into vain curiosity! They wish to know about everything that is going on in the Church and Kingdom of Christ, but they are far enough from caring to become part and parcel of it, themselves. They are possessed with an idle curiosity which would lift the golden lid of the Ark and intrude behind the veil.

They like to gather together all the absurd stories which are told about ministers and to retail all the odd remarks that were ever made by preachers for centuries. All the gossip of the Churches is sure to be known to them, for they eat up the sins of Gods people as they eat bread! It is not likely that their knowledge of religious things will be of any use to them, but they are always eager after it. The Church of God is their lounge; Divine service is their theater; ministers are to them, as actors, and the Gospel, itself, so much play-house property. They are a sort of religious Athenians, spending their time in nothing else than in hearing some new thing, hoping that, perhaps, some singular and unexpected discourse may be delivered in their hearing which they can retail in the next company where they would raise a laugh. To them, preaching is all a farce and, worked up with a few falsehoods of their own, it makes excellent fun for them and causes them to be regarded as amusing fellows. Let them look at Herod and see in him their leader, the type of what they really are or may soon become!

First, let us see idle curiosity at its best. Look here, Sirs, and then look in a glass and trace the likeness! To begin with, we find that Herods curiosity had been created in him by his having heard many things concerning Jesus. How did he come to hear of Him? His great deeds were common talkall Jerusalem rang with the news of His miracles and wondrous words. Herod, a convert to the Jewish faith, such as he was, took interest in anything that was going on among the Jews and all the more so if it touched upon the kingdom, for the jealousy which set his father in a rage was not altogether absent in his son. No doubt, also, he had heard of Christ from John. John would not long have preached to Herod without using his own grand text, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.

I am sure that, though he was a preacher of righteousness, he had not left off being the herald of the coming Savior! And so, from the stern lips of the great Baptist, Herod had heard concerning the King of the Jews and something concerning His Kingdom. When John was dead, Herod heard still more of Christ, so that, astonished with what was being done, he said, This is John the Baptist whom I have beheaded: he is risen from the dead! Jesus became a kind of nightmare to his conscience. He was disturbed and alarmed by what he heard that the Prophet of Nazareth was doing. Besides that, there was one in his household who doubtless knew a great deal about the Savior, for in Herods court was the husband of a woman who ministered unto the Lord of her substance.

The ladys name was Joanna and her husband was Chuza, Herods stewardI suppose Herods butler and manager of his household. From Chuza he could readily have learned concerning Jesus and we may be sure that he would enquire, for the fear of the great Prophet was upon him. Thus Herods curiosity had been excited about our Lord Jesus Christ for a considerable time and he longed to see Him. I am not sorry when this happens to any of my Hearers. I am right glad that they should hear something about the Lord from His friends, something about Him from His ministers and from those of us whose highest glory it is that, though we are not worthy to unloose the laces of His shoes, yet it is all our business here below to cry, Behold the Lamb! So these rumors, this talk, these admonitions had begotten in Herods mind the desire that his eyes should light on Jesusso far, so good.

Often men at this day come up to the House of Prayer that they may hear the preachernot because they want to be converted, not because they have any idea of ever becoming followers of Jesusbut because they have heard something about true religion which excites their curiosity and they want to know what it is all about. They are fond of curiosities of literature and so they would study curiosities of religion, oddities of oratory and things remarkable of a theological kind. It is said of Herod, in consequence of this curiosity, that he rejoiced to see Jesus. It is said that he was, exceedingly glad. What a hopeful state to be in! May we not expect great things when a man sees Jesus and is exceedingly glad? As I read this passage to myself, I thought, Why, the language might well describe a child of God! Our text might fitly be spoken concerning ourselves!

Let me read it line by line and remark upon it. When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad. So were the Apostles when Jesus manifested Himself to them, for it is written, Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. What other sight could bring to a true Believer such joy? For he was desirous to see Him. Are we not? Are not all His people longing for that blessed vision which will make their Heaven throughout eternity? For he was desirous to see Him for a long season. This is also true of usour hearts are weary with watching and our eyes fail for the sight of His face. Why does He tarry? we cry. Make haste, my Beloved, and be You like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices. Because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him.

This, also, is our hopewe would both see and feel some gracious miracleupon our eyes, that they may be opened, or upon our hands, that we may have greater power in the Masters work! Or upon our feet, that we may run in the ways of obedience. And especially upon our hearts, that we may be always soft and tender, pure and gracious, to feel the mind of God. Yes, these words read very prettily, indeed! But yet, you see, the meaning was not the high and spiritual one which we could put into them, but the low and groveling one which was all that Herod could reach. He was exceedingly glad, but it was a frivolous gladness because he hoped that now his curiosity would be satisfied.

He had Jesus in his power and he hoped, now, to hear some of the oratory of the Prophet of whom men said, Never man spoke like this Man. He hoped to see Him work a miracle, even He, of whom the record was, He has done all things well. Could not the great Prophet be induced to multiply loaves and fishes? Might he not persuade Him to heal a blind beggar, or make a lame man leap as a hart? Would not a miracle make rare mirth in Herods palace and cause a new sensation in the mind of the worn-out debauchee? If, for instance, a corpse were dug up and Jesus would restore it to life, it would be something to tell when next the king sat down to a drinking bout with Herodias and her like! When each was trying to exceed the other in telling strange tales, Herod would top them all!

In this style many people come to hear the Gospel. They want to have an anecdote of their own about a notorious preacherand if they do see something ludicrous, or hear something striking, they will invent a tale and swear that they heard it and saw it, though the lie might well choke them! They act thus because they come to hear for nothing but to feed their hungry curiosity! None carry this to such an extreme as those who did at one time feel a measure of the power of the Word of God but have shaken it off. These are the mockers whose bands are made strong. These are the idlers who turn even the testimony of the Lord into food for mirth! Still, at the first blush, there is something that looks very hopeful about them and we are pleased that they exhibit such gladness when Christ is set forth before them.

One evil sign about Herod was the fact that his conscience had gone to sleep after having, for a while, troubled him. For a little while he had been afraid of Jesus and trembled lest John had risen from the dead. But that fear had subsided and superstition had given way before his Sadducean skepticism. He hoped that Jesus would perform some wonderful thing in his presence, but he had lost all dread of the Just and Holy One. He was a man of vain mindthe man whom he feared one dayhe murdered the next! And He whom he welcomed with gladness, he hurried off with derision. There was left to Herod no feeling towards Jesus but the craving after something new, the desire to be astonished, the wish to be amused.

I think I see him now, sitting on his throne, expectant of wonders, like the trifler that he was. Now we shall see, he says, now we shall see what we shall see! Perhaps He will deliver Himself by sheer force! If He walked the sea, He will probably fly away in the air! Perhaps He will render Himself invisible and so pass away through the midst of the chief priests. I have heard that many a time when they would have stoned Him or cast Him down from the brow of a hill, He departed, gliding through their midstperhaps He will do the same this morning. There sits the cunning prince, thinking what the wonder will beregarding even displays of Divine power as mere showmans tricks, or magicians illusions!

When Jesus was set before Him, he began to ask Him questions. Then he questioned Him in many words. I am glad the questions are not recorded. They could have done us no good and, besides, our modern Herods, nowadays, are great masters of the art and need not that any man teach them. We need not to be furnished with the old-fashioned quibbles and questions, for the supply is quite equal to our requirements. Fools can ask more questions in 10 minutes than wise men are able to answer in 50 years! I say we do not need the old questions, but I daresay they would run somewhat in this line, Are You that King of the Jews whom my father strove to slay? How came You are a Nazarene? Have You been a miracle worker, or is it all slight of hand and black magic? John told me something about You. Did You deceive him, or is it true? Have you raised the dead? Can you heal the sick?

Trying all the while to excite Him to work a miracle, he raised doubts and chopped logic volubly, for the text suggestively mentions his, many words. The curious in religion are generally very apt at asking questions, not that they want Christ; not that they want Heaven; not that they want pardon of sinnot that they want any good thingbut still they would like to know everything that is dark and mysterious in theology. They would like to have a list of the difficulties of belief, a catalog of the curiosities of spiritual experience. Some men collect ferns, others are learned upon beetles, but these persons pry into Church life, its doctrines, pursuits, aims and infirmitiesespecially the latter! They could write a book upon orthodox England and unorthodox England and dwell with unction upon mental vagaries.   
It furnishes them with something new and adds to their store of informationand so they spare no prying questions, for they would analyze manna from Heaven, and distil the tears of Christnothing is sacred to them! They put Scripture on the rack and laugh at the words of the Holy Spirit!

Thus have I set forth idle curiosity in its latter stage. Now let us pass on an see how Jesus treated this curiosity, considering it under the head of IDLE CURIOSITY DISAPPOINTED. He questioned Him in many words, but He answered him nothing! If Herod had wanted to believe, Jesus would have been ready enough to instruct. If Herod had possessed a broken heart, Jesus would have hastened with tender words to bind it up. If Herod bad been a candid enquirer; if his doubts had been sincere and true, the faithful and true Witness, the Prince of the kings of the earth, would have been delighted to speak with him!

But Jesus knew that Herod would not believe in Him and would not take up his cross and follow Him and, therefore, He would not waste words on a heartless, soulless profligate. Had He not said to His own disciples, Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast you your pearls before swine? He saw in this man one so mean, cunning, cowardly and heartless that He viewed him as a fox to be let alone rather than a lost sheep to be sought after! He was a tree twice dead and plucked up by the roots. All the Master did was to maintain an absolute silence in his presence, and let him question as he might, He answered him nothing.

Observe, my Brothers and Sisters, that our Lord Jesus Christ came not into this world to be a performer! He did not leave His Glory to earn the wondering approbation of men. And as Herod regarded Him as a mere wonderworker and would have turned his court into a theater where Jesus would be the chief actor, our Lord very wisely held His peace and did nothing at all. And sometimes His ministers might be wise if they were silent, too. If they know that men have no desire to learn, no spiritual wish or aspiration, I say they might be wise if they held their tongue altogether. I have sometimes admired George Fox, who, on one occasion, when the crowd had gathered round him, expecting him to deliver some fiery address, stood still by the space of two hours while they clamored that he should speak.

Never a word did they get from him. He said he would famish them of words for words were all they wanted and not the power of the Spirit. Probably they remembered his silence better than they would have remembered his most vehement discourse. Sometimes silence is all that men deserve and the only thing which, in any probability, will impress them. As the Lord Jesus was no performer, He did not gratify Herod, but answered him not a word. Moreover, be it remembered that Herod had already silenced the Voice and no marvel that he could not hear the Word. For what was John? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. What was Jesus but the Word? He that silences the Voice may well be denied the Word!

Had not his shallow soul been movedI was about to say, to its depths, such depths as they werehad he not been admonished by one of the greatest of the children of men? For among them that were born of women there had not, then, been a greater than John the Baptist! Had not a burning and shining light shone right into his very eyes? And if he refused to hear the greatest of the sons of men and to see the brightest light that God had then kindled, it was but right that the Savior should refuse him even a ray of light and let him perish in the darkness which he had, himself, created. Ah, Sirs, you cannot trifle with religious impressions with impunity! God thinks it no trifle! He who has once been moved in his soul and has put away the heavenly Word of God may fear that it will be said of him, My Spirit shall not always strive with man. Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

May not some conscience here, if it has but a little life in it, be alarmed at the memory of former rejections of the Gospel, frequent quenching of the Spirit, repeated trampling upon the blood of Jesus? If God never speaks to you again in the way of mercy, you have no right to expect that He should do so! And if, from this day to the Day of Judgment, the Lord should never give you another word of mercy, who shall say that you have been treated harshly? Have you not deserved it at His hands as Herod had done?

Furthermore, remember that Herod might have heard Christ hundreds of times before if he had chosen to do so. Jesus was always to be found by those who desired to listen to Him. He did not go sneaking about Galilee, or holding secret conventicles in holes and corners. He always spoke in the synagogue and Herod might have gone there. He spoke in the street or by the seashore, or on the mountain side and Herod might have gone there, too. Jesus stood out boldly before the people and His teaching was public and freeif Herod had wished to hear Him, he might have done so times beyond number! Therefore now, having despised all these opportunities, the Savior will not furnish Him with another which he would have treated in the same manner. He answers him nothing and by so doing answered him terribly.

Beware how you use opportunities. Dear Hearers, beware how you use your Sabbaths. There may come a day when you would give a thousand worlds for another Sabbath, but it shall be denied you. There may come a day when you would count out all your wealth to have another invitation to Christ, but it will be denied you, for you must die and the voice of Mercy will never ring in your ears again! They that will not when they may, shall not when they could! Many will knock after the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door. But when He shuts, no man opens. The door was shut on Herod.

Observe that our Master had good reason for refusing to speak to Herod this time, over and above what I have mentionedbecause He would not have it supposed that He yielded to the pomp and dignity of men! Jesus never refused an answer to the question of a beggar, but He would not gratify the curiosity of a king. Herod dreams that he has a right to ask whatever impertinent questions he may choose to invent, but Jesus knows nothing of mens rights in such a matterit is all Grace with Him and to Him the prince upon the throne is not an atom better than the peasant in the cottage! And so when Herod, in all his pride and glory thinks full sure that Christ will pay deference to him and, perhaps, will pay him court to win his favor, Jesus disregards him!

He wants nothing of the murderer of John the Baptist! Had Herod been the poorest and most loathsome leper throughout all Judea. Had he been the meanest beggar in the street who was lame or blind, his voice would at once been heard by the Lord of Mercy! But He will not answer the prince who hopes for homage at His hands, nor feed the idle wishes of a crafty reprobate! What favor did He need at Herods hand? He had not come to be set freeHe had come to die and, therefore, His face is set like a flint, and, with heroic courage, He answers him not a word. Now, then, you have seen frivolous curiosity at its best and you have seen it disappointed, as it generally is to this day. If people come to hear the Gospel out of this frivolous curiosity, they usually retire saying, Really, I do not see anything in it. We have heard nothing eloquent, nothing profound, nothing outrageous.

Just so. There is nothing in the Gospel to please the luxurious, though everything to bless the poor! Jesus answered Herod nothing and He will answer you nothing if you are of Herods order. It is the doom of triflers that they should get no answer from the Gospel! Neither the Scriptures, nor the ministry, nor the Spirit of God, nor the Lord Jesus will speak with them. What was the result of this disappointment upon Herod? Idle curiosity curdles into derision. He thinks Jesus is a fool, if not an idiot, and he says so and begins to deride Him. With his men of war he mocks Him and set Him at naught, which signifies to make nothing of Him. He calls his soldiers and says, Look at this creatureHe will not answer a word to what I have to sayis He bereft of His senses? Wake Him up and see.

Then they mock and laugh and jest and jeer. Here, says Herod, He calls Himself a King! Bring out one of my shining white robes and put it on Him! We will make a King of Him. So they put it about His blessed Person and again heap insults upon Him. Was it not strangethis decking Him in a gorgeous robe of dazzling white? The mediaeval writers delight to dwell on the fact that Herod arrayed our Lord in white and afterwards Pilate clothed Him in red. Is He not the Lily of the valley and the Rose of Sharon? Is He not matchlessly white for innocence and then gloriously red in His atoning blood? Thus, in their very mockery, they are unconsciously setting forth to us both His spotless holiness and His majestic royalty!

When they had insulted to their full, they sent Him back to Pilate, kicking Him from foot to foot at their pleasure, as if He were a football for their sport. Then our Lord made His fourth sorrowful march through the streets of the city over which He had wept. That is what idlers in the long run do with Christin their disappointment they grow weary of Him and His Gospel and they cry, Put Him away; there is nothing in Him, nothing of what we looked for, nothing to satisfy curiosity, nothing sensational; take Him away! Away goes Jesus, never to return, and that is the end of Herod and the end of a great many more.

II. My time is nearly gone, but bear with me while, for a few minutes, I try to set forth JESUS IN THE PRESENCE OF HEROD. Although no blows are recorded, I greatly question whether our Divine Master suffered anywhere more than He did in the palace of Herod. You and I, perhaps, apprehend most easily the woe of the coarser sufferings when they scourged Him and when they plaited the crown of thorns and put it upon His head. But the delicate and sensitive mind of our Master was, perhaps, more touched by what He suffered in the palace of Herod than by the rougher torture. For, first, here is a Man fully in earnest for the salvation of our soulsand in the midst of His grievous passion He is looked upon as a mountebank and a mere performer who is expected to work a miracle for the amusement of an impious court.

How it cuts an earnest man to the quick when he finds that, let him do what he may, people do not sympathize with him in earnest, but are coolly criticizing his style, or imitating his mannerisms, or admiring his expressions as matters of literary taste. It is heart-breaking, when your ardor makes you self-forgetful, to find others pecking at trifles, or making your efforts into a kind of show. The Christ must have been wounded in His very soul when He was treated as a mere performeras if He had left the Fathers bosom and was about to give Himself to death and yet was aiming to amuse or to astonish! I know how it saddens my Lords servants when they preach their very hearts out, to bring men to repentance, and the only result is to elicit the remark that, His arguments were very telling and that pathetic passage was very fine. There is a thorn in such chill words to pierce deeper than the crown of thorns! Horrible indifference smites like the Roman scourge.

Then to think of our Lords being questioned by such a fop as Herod! A Man of earnest and intense soul, living for one thing only, and that the redemption of mankindis here worried by the foolish questions of a man of the world! Were you ever in an agony of bodily pain, yourself, and did some frivolous person call upon you and begin to torture you with the most wicked nonsense and absurdities? Have you not felt that his chatter was worse than the pain? It must have been so with Jesus. When the ridiculous must question the sublime, the result is misery! With the bloody sweat yet damp upon His brow and with the accursed spit still defacing His blessed Countenance, the Man of Sorrows must be tortured by the driveling of a heartless idler! With His heart all bowed down under a sense of the awful penalty of sin, the great Substitute for sinners must be molested by the petty small talk and ribald jests of the meanest of mankind!

Solving eternal problems and building up an Everlasting Temple unto the living God, He must be twitted by a vainglorious tetrarch; tormented and tortured by foolish questions fit only to be asked of an impostor. We think the Cross, itself, was not a worse instrument of torture than the haughty tongue of this debauched monarch! Then the ribaldry of the whole thing must have tortured our Lord. The whole of them gathered round about Him with their hoarse laughter and coarse jests. He has become a byword and a proverb to them. When you are merry, you can enjoy merriment, but when the heart is sad, laughter is wretchedly discordant and embitters your grief. Now this one laughs and then another sneerswhile a third thrusts out the tongue and they are all uproariously jovial! In harmony they are all making nothing of Him, though with awful earnestness He is lifting the world out of the slough of despair and hanging it in its place, again, among the stars of Glory!

Jesus was performing more than Herculean labors and these little beings, like so many gnats and flies, were stinging Him! Small things are great at torturing and these worthless beings did their utmost to torment our Lord. Oh, the torture of the Masters spirit! Remember, it was no small sorrow to our Lord to be silent. You tell me that He appears majestic in His silence? It is so, but the pain of it was acute. Can you speak well? Do you love to speak for the good of your fellow men and do you know that when you speak, full often your words are spirit and life to those who hear you? It will be very hard to feel compelled to refuse them a good word. Do not imagine that the Lord despised Herod as Herod despised the Lord. Ah, no! The pity of His soul went out to this poor frivolous creature who must make sport of the Saviors sufferings and treat the Son of the Highest as though He were a court fool who must play before him.

The Saviors infinite love was breaking His heart, for He longed to bless His persecutor and yet He must not speak, nor give forth a warning word. True, there was little need for words, for His very Presence was a sermon which ought to have melted a heart of stonebut yet it cost the Savior a mighty effort to keep down the floodgates and hold in the blessed torrents of His holy speech which would have flowed out in compassionate pleading. Silent He must be, but the anguish of it, I can scarcely tell. Sometimes to be permitted to speak a word is the greatest comfort you can have. Have you ever been in such a state that if you could cry out it would have been a relief to you? What anguish, then, to be forced to be as a dumb man! What woe to be forced to be silent with all these mockers about Him and yet to be pitying them all!

As a man might pity a moth that flies into the flame of the candle and will not be delivered, so did our Lord pity these creatures. How sad that they could make sport of their own damnation, fling the salvation of God to the ground and tread it down as swine tread down their husks! Oh, it grieved the Masters heart! It moved His soul to its very center. Think of the utter contempt that was poured upon Him. I do not judge that this was the bitterest of His woes, for their contempt was an honor to Him. But it was one ingredient of His cup of mingled wormwood and gall that they should so despise Him as to clothe Him in a white robe and mock His kingshipwhen on that kingship their only hope was hung! They set Him at naught, that is, put Him down as nothing, jeered and jested at Him and if there was nothing, even, about His Manhood which they could respectthey invented ways by which they could pour scorn upon Him.

Luke is the Gospel of the Manif you want to read about Jesus in His Manhood, read Lukeand there you will see how His very Manhood was trampled in the mire by these inhuman creatures who found their joy in despising Him! See, then, your Lord and Master, and let me put two or three questions to you. Do you not think that this peculiar silence of Jesus was a part of His anguish in which He was bearing the punishment for your sins of the tongue? Ah me, ah me! Redeemed of the Lord, how often have you misused your speech by wanton words! How often have we uttered murmuring words, proud words, false words, words of despite to holy thingsand now our sins of the tongue are all coming upon Jesus and He must stand silent and bear our penalty!

And is it not possible that when they put the gorgeous robe upon Him, He was bearing your sins of vanity, your sins of dress and pride when you made yourselves glorious to behold and arrayed yourselves in gorgeous robes and glittering apparel? Know you not that these things are your shame? For had you had no sin, you would have needed none of these poor ragsand may not the Christ in white and red be bearing your sins of folly? And do you not think that when they were making Him nothing and despising Him, He was, then, bearing our sins when we set Him at naught with our words of despite and derisionand when, perhaps, in our ungodly days we, too, made sport of holy things and jested at the Word of God? Ah me, I think it was so and I ask you to look at Him and say as you see Him there, It is not Herod after all! It is my tongue, my vanity, my trifling with holy things which caused Him this exquisite torture! Lord Jesus, Substitute for me, let all these transgressions of mine be put away once and for all by Your meritorious passion.

Finally, we read that Herod and Pilate were made friends from that day on and I hope if there are any here that are true-hearted Christians, if they have had any ill-will towards one another, they will think it a great shame that Herod and Pilate should be friends and that any two followers of Jesus should not be friends at the sight of the suffering Master! As for those two foxes, Pilate and Herod, they were tied, tail to tail, that day by our great Samson! Our Lord has often been a point of union for wicked mennot by His intent and purposebut because they have joined together to oppose Him. I have often smiled in my heart to see how superstition and skepticism will march together when they are anxious to oppose the Gospel. Then the Sadducee says, Give me your hand, dear Pharisee. We have a common interest here, for this Man would overturn us all. The Gospel is the mortal enemy both of the skeptical Sadducee and the superstitious Phariseeand so they lay aside their differences to assail it.

Now, then, if the wicked unite before our Lord Jesus when He wears the white robe, should not His people much more be united, especially when they remember that He said, A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another. I charge you by your homage to Him you call Master and Lord, if you have any difference of any sort with any Christian Brother or Sister, let not yon sun go down till you have ended it by hearty love for Jesus sake! Let it be seen that Christ is the great Uniter of all those who are in Him. He would have us love one another even as He has loved us! And His prayer is that we may be one. May the Lord hear that prayer and make us one in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1320 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHY SHOULD I WEEP?

**NO. 1320**

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 22, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.**

**For if they do these things in a green tree,   
what shall be done in the dry?   
Luke 23:27-31.**

CAN you picture the scene? Jesus is given up by Pilate to the Jews that they may do their will with Him and, led by a small band of soldiers, He is conducted into the public street, bearing His Cross upon His shoulders. Perhaps they judged Him to be weary with His night of watching and worn with His suffering from the scourge, and they feared lest He might die upon the road and, therefore, with a cruel mercy, they laid hold upon one in the crowd who had too loudly expressed His sympathy, impressed him into military service and compelled him to assist in carrying the instrument of execution. You see the haughty scribes and the ribald throng but the center of the spectacle, and the cause of it all was our Lord HimselfJesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

We cannot paint Him. All who have ever attempted to do so have, to a large extent, been unsuccessful, for there was upon His face a mingled majesty and meekness, loveliness and lowliness, sanctity and sorrow which it would not be possible to express upon canvas or to represent in words. About His Person there were abundant marks of cruelty. He had been scourged. Everyone could see it. His own garments, which they had put upon Him, could not conceal the marks of the Roman lash. The traces of the crown of thorns were on His brow and the rough treatment of the soldiers had left its tokens, too, so that His visage was more marred than that of any man. And His form more than the sons of men.

And now He is being led away to be put to the shameful death of the Cross. There were some glad eyes there, delighted that, at last, their victim was in their power and that the eloquent tongue which had exposed their hypocrisy would now be silenced in death. There, too, were the unfeeling Romans, to whom human life was a trifle. And all around, gathered in dense masses, the brutal mob, bribed to shout against their best Friend. But all then present were not in this savage mood. There were someand to the honor of the sex it is recorded that they were women who entered their protest by their cries and lamentations.

Not silently in their sorrow did they weep, but they began to lament aloud and bewail audibly, as though they were attending the funeral of some dear friend, or expected the death of one of their kindred. The voice of a womans weeping has great power with most of us, but it would not stir the stony hearts of Roman legionaries. The wail of women was no more to them than the moaning of the winds among the forest trees! Yet it must have struck many of the less stern and stolid mold and filled their souls with some measure of kindred feeling. Chiefly, however, did it strike One, the most tender hearted among them all, One whose ear was delicately sensitive to every sound of sorrow.

And though He had not answered Herod and had given Pilate but a few words of reply. And though amidst all the mockeries and scourging He had been as dumb as a sheep before her shearers, yet He paused and, looking round upon the weeping company, piteously, yet sublimely broke the silence by saying to them, Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. As for the words, themselves, they are especially noteworthy, because they constitute the last connected discourse of the Savior before He died. All that He said afterwards was fragmentary and mainly of the nature of prayer. A sentence to John and to His mother, and to the dying thief. Just a word or two looking downward, but for the most part He uttered broken sentences which flew upwards on the wings of strong desire.

This was His last address, a farewell sermonette delivered amid surroundings most sad and solemn, restraining tears and yet, at the same time, causing them to flow. We reckon the words to be all the more weighty and full of solemnity because of the occasion, but even apart from this, the truths delivered were, in themselves, of the utmost importance and solemnity. This last discourse of our Lord before His death was terribly prophetic to a world rejecting Himportentous of a thousand woes to a people whom He lovedwoes which even He could not avert because they had rejected His interposition and refused the mercy which He came to bring. Daughters of Jerusalem, said He, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

Not many hours before, He had, Himself, set them the example by weeping over the doomed city, and crying, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the Prophets, and stone them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Looking even upon the surface of the words you will perceive that they bear His undoubted image and superscription. Who but He would have spoken after this sort? You are sure that the passage is genuine, for it is, in all respects, so inimitably Christ-like. See how self-oblivious He wasfor Himself He asks not even tears of sympathy. Was there no cause for grief? Yes, cause enough, and yet He says, Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, as if all His thoughts were taken up with other griefs than His own and He would not have a tear wasted upon Him, but spent on woes which grieved Him more than His own pangs.

Observe the majesty of the speech, too, steeped as the speaker was in misery. You can see that His is sorrow which well deserved to be wept over, but He is not overcome by it, but rather His royal soul reigns in the future. And as a King, He anticipates His scepter and His Judgment Seat and foretells the doom of those who now insult Him. Here is no cowardly spirit, no confession of defeat, no appeal for pity, no shadow of petty resentment, but on the contrary, a majestic consciousness of strength! With His calm, prophetic eye, He looks beyond the intervening years and sees Jerusalem besieged and captured. He speaks as though He heard the awful shrieks which betokened the entrance of the Romans into the city and the smiting down of young and old, women and children.

No, mark how His piercing eyes see yet furtherHe beholds and describes the day when He shall sit upon the Throne of Judgment and summon all men to His bar. When He who was, then, the weary Man before His foes should alarm the ungodly by the appearance of His Countenance, so that they would call to the mountains to fall upon them and to the rocks to hide them from His face! He speaks as if conscious of the majesty that would be upon Him in that dreadful day and yet, at the same time, pitiful towards those who, by their sins, were bringing upon themselves so terrible a doom! He says, in effect, Weep for those concerning whom it would have been better that they had never been born, and for whom annihilation would be a consummation devoutly to be wished.

He dries up the tears which were flowing for Himself, that the women may draw up the sluices of their souls and let the torrents of their grief flow forth for impenitent sinners who will be filled with unutterable dismay at His Second Coming. May the Holy Spirit help me while handling this awful subject! The text very readily divides itself into two parts. The one may be headed, Weep not. The other, Weep. The first is, Weep not, or what the Savior suggested. The second is, Weep, or what the Savior commanded.

I. He said to the weeping women, WEEP NOT. There are some cold, calculating expositors who make it out that our Lord reproved these women for weeping and that there was something wrong, or, if not altogether wrong, yet something very far from commendable in their sorrow. I think they call it, the sentimental sympathy, of these kind souls. There is no being much more unnatural than a cold-blooded commentator who bites at every letter and nibbles at the grammatical meaning of every syllable, translating with his lexicon, but never exercising common sense, or allowing even the least play to his heart.

Blame these women? No! Bless them again and again! It was the one redeeming trait in the dread march along the Via Dolorosa! Let it not be dreamed that Jesus could have censured those who wept for Him! No! No! Noa thousand times, No! These gentle women appear in a happy contrast to the chief priests with their savage malice, and to the thoughtless multitude with their fierce cry of, Crucify Him, crucify Him! They seem, to me, to have shown a noble courage in daring to express their sympathy with One whom everybody else hunted to death with such ferocity. To espouse His cause amid those hoarse cries of, Crucify Him, crucify Him, was courage more than manly! Those women were heroines more valiant than those who rush upon the spoil. Those lamentations, in sympathy with Him who was being led to die, are worthy of our praise and not of

our criticism!

Our Lord accepted the sympathy they evinced and it was only His great disinterested unselfishness which made Him say, Spare your griefs for other sorrows. It was not because they were wrong, but because there was something still more necessary to be done than even to weep for Him. I do not think we erred when we sang just now

*A moment give loose to grief,   
Let grateful sorrows rise,   
And wash the bloody stains away   
With torrents from your eyes.*   
Have we not all felt it to be a gracious exercise to sing in unison that almost dirge   
*Oh come and mourn with me awhile;   
Oh come to the Saviors side;   
Oh come, together let us mourn:   
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.   
Have we no tears to shed for Him,   
While soldiers scoff and Jews deride?   
Ah! Look how patiently He hangs;   
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified?*   
Who among us, for words like these, can blame Dr. Watts and others when they sing

*Thus might I hide my blushing face,   
While His dear Cross appears,   
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,   
And melt my eyes to tears?*   
There can be nothing ill about the weeping of these women and, therefore, let us proceed to say, first, that their sorrow was legitimate and wellgrounded. There was reason for their weeping! They saw Him suffering, friendless and hunted to deaththey could not but bewail Him! Had I been there and seen Him all alone, and marked the cruel eyes that watched Him, and heard the malicious voices which assailed Him, I, too, must have wept! I hope I am not so past feeling as to have looked on without overflowing sorrow. See those bleeding shoulders, those lacerated templesmark, above all, that quiet, unrivalled God-like Countenance, so marred with sacred grief! One must have wept, surely, if one had a heart anywhere within him, to think that He who suffered thus, and was about to suffer so much more, should be so gentle and so unresisting! Was not this cause for intense sympathy? He was meek and lowly in heart and, therefore, He returned none of those fierce looks and answered none of those ferocious words.   
He was like a lamb in the midst of wolves, or a dove surrounded by a thousand hawks, or a milk-white hare amid baying hounds! There was none to pity and none to help! Shall we, then, refuse our compassion? No! You womens eyes, you did well to weephow could you help it, since you were mothers of children and, therefore, had hearts to love? How could you help weeping for Him who was so lowly, so gentle, so unselfish, so submissive to all they put upon Him? Surely it was a superfluity of malice to be hunting Him to death who, even in life, was so much the Man of Sorrows! And then He was so innocent and pure! What had He done amiss? They could not answer Pilates challengeWhy, what evil has He done? There was no fault in Him, they could not find any!   
You could see by the very look of Him that He was the purest of all mankindthat all around Him was sin and vanityyet He, alone, was Holiness and Truth! Why, then, should they lead Him forth among malefactors and nail those blessed hands and feet to the wood and hang Him to a tree? Above all, in addition to His being innocent of fault, He had been so full of kindnessof more than kindnessof infinite love to all mankind and even in His deepest sorrow boundless benevolence shone in His Countenance, beaming as the sun! He looked upon His enemies and His glance was royal but it was tender, too. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, was trembling on His lips. He would not harm them. Not He! He would not curse them though His curse had withered them, nor even frown upon them, though that frown might have secured His liberation! He was too good to render evil for evil!   
These women remembered what a life He had led. They remembered how He had fed the hungryperhaps some of them had even eaten of the loaves and fishes. They remembered how He had healed their children, raised their dead and had dislodged foul fiends from the bodies of their friends. He had preached openly in their streets and He had never taught ill will, but always gentleness and love. He had been popular and stood at the head of the multitude at one time, but He had never used His power for selfish purposes. He had ridden through their streets in pomp, but the pomp was simple and homelyon a colt, the foal of an ass had He ridden with children for His courtiersand with no sound of the trumpets of war, but only with the childrens cries of, Hosanna, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.   
Why should they crucify Him? He had done nothing but good! His noble Presence seemed to appeal to the women and they asked each other, For which of His works would they slay Him? For which of His actions would they put Him to death? He, the Friend of the friendless, why should He die? I cannot, I say again, but commend the tears of these women! It is little marvel that they should weep and bewail when they saw the Innocent One about to die. I think, too, that this weeping on the part of the women was a very hopeful emotion. It was far better, certainly, than the nonemotion or the cruelty of those who formed that motley throng. It showed some tenderness of heart, and tenderness of heart, though it is but natural, may often serve as a groundwork upon which better and holier and more spiritual feelings may be placed.   
It is objected that persons weep when they hear the story of other griefs besides those of Jesus and I am glad they do. Should they not weep with them that weep? It is also objected that this natural sympathy may, in many cases, be as much due to the skill of the orator as in others it is the undoubted result of the music of the oratorio. I know it is so. I am going to show you that mere emotional sympathy is not all, nor a half, nor a tenth of what is needed. Still, I should be sorry if I thought myself capable of remembering the griefs of Jesus without emotion while other mens woes affected me. And I should greatly deplore the fact if it were, indeed, true that you were all, especially you women, so hardened that you could think of Jesus of Nazareth bleeding and dying without your hearts beginning to melt.   
The emotion is good, at any rate, so far that if it were absent you would be bereft of humanity and turned to stones. It is hopeful because it opens a door through which something better may enter. This tenderness is a natural stock suitable for grafting something far higher upon. He who can weep for the sorrows of Christ may soon be on the road towards weeping over the sin which caused the sorrow, or he may be on the highway towards being able to lament, as Christ bids men lament, those other griefs and miseries which sin brings upon themselves and upon their children. I would not carry the emotional towards Christ to an excess, nor ask men to make Jesus death only a fountain of sorrow, since it is also a source of joy. I would deplore that idolatrous emotion which weeps before a hideous image, or mourns over touching a picture. But still, I would not have men, at the thought of Jesus dying, act as if they were sticks and stones, but prove that they mourn for Him whom they have pierced.   
Having said this much, we now add that on our Lords part, such sorrow was fitly repressed, because, after all, though naturally good, it is not more than natural, and falls short of spiritual excellence. It is no proof of the work of the Spirit upon your heart that you weep as you hear the story of Christs death, for probably you would have been even more affected had you seen a murderer hanged. It is no proof that you are truly saved because you are moved to great emotions whenever you hear the details of the Crucifixion, for the Bulgarian atrocities excited you equally as much. I think it good that you should be moved, as I have said before, but it is only naturally and not spiritually good.   
Doubtless there are many who have shed more tears over the silly story of a love-sick maid in a frivolous novel than they have ever given to the story of the Lover of our souls. Though they have felt emotion when they have pictured the sufferings of Emmanuel, they have felt even more when the bewitching pen of fiction has sketched some imaginary picture of fancied woes. No, no, these natural sympathies are not to be commended so that we wish you to be continually exercised with them! Our Lord did well to give them healthy bounds. Besides, such feeling is generally very evanescent. Tears of mere emotion, because of the external sufferings of Christ, are speedily wiped away and forgotten.   
We do not know that any of these women ever became our Lords converts. Among those who met in the upper room we do not know that any had taken part with this company of weepers. These were women of Jerusalem and the followers of Christ at His death, who ministered unto Him, were generally women from Galilee. For this see Matthew 27:54-56. I fear that the most of these Jerusalem sympathizers forgot tomorrow that they had wept today. I may be mistaken, but there is nothing in the mere fact of their lamenting the Saviors doom which would prove them to be His regenerated followers. The morning cloud and the early dew are fit emblems of such fleeting emotions.   
Such weeping, too, is morally powerlessit has no effect upon the mind. It does not change the character. It does not cause the putting away of sin, nor create real and saving faith in Jesus Christ. Many tears are shed under powerful sermons that are so much wasted fluidwhen the discourse is over, the sorrow has ceased. There was no work of Grace upon the inner heart, it was all surface work and no more. The worst of it is, such feeling is often deceptive, for people are apt to think, I must have something good in me, for what a time of weeping I had under the sermon and how tender I felt when I heard the description of Christ upon the Cross!   
Yes, and thus you may wrap yourself up in the belief that you are under the influence of the Holy Spirit when, after all, it is only ordinary human feeling. You may conclude, Surely these drops come from a heart of flesh, when it may be only moisture condensed upon a heart of stone! This feeling, too, may stand in the way of something a great deal better. Jesus would not have these women weep for one thing, because they were to weep for another thing which far more seriously demanded their weeping! You need not weep because Christ died one-tenth as much as because your sins rendered it necessary that He should die! You need not weep over the Crucifixion, but weep over your transgressions, for your sins nailed the Redeemer to the accursed tree!  
To weep over a dying Savior is to lament the remedyit were wiser to bewail the disease. To weep over the dying Savior is to wet the surgeons knife with tearsit were better to bewail that spreading polyp which that knife must cut away! To weep over the Lord Jesus as He goes to the Cross is to weep over that which is the subject of the highest joy that ever Heaven and earth have known! Your tears are scarcely needed therethey are naturalbut a deeper wisdom will make you brush them all away and chant with joy His victory over death and the grave! If we must continue our sad emotions, let us lament that we should have broken the Law which He thus painfully vindicated. Let us mourn that we should have incurred the penalty which He, even to the death, was made to endure. Jesus wished them not so much to look at His outward sufferings as at the secret inward cause of that outward sorrow, namely, the transgression and the iniquity of His people which had laid the Cross upon His shoulders and surrounded Him with enemies! As I quoted, just now, certain verses which led us to lament our Lord, let me propose to you as better, still, those words of Watts

**Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins,   
His chief tormentors were!   
Each of my crimes became a nail,   
And unbelief the spear.   
Twas you that pulled the vengeance down Upon His guiltless head:   
Break, break, my heart, oh burst my eyes! And let my sorrows bleed.   
Strike, mighty Grace, my flinty soul,   
Till melting waters flow,   
And deep repentance drowns my eyes   
In sorrow and in woe.**   
II. Now we pass on from, Weep not, to, WEEP. May God the Holy Spirit help us to dwell upon that for a while with profit to our souls. Though Jesus stops one channel for tears, he opens another and a wider one. Let us look to it. First, when He said, Weep for yourselves, He meant that they were to lament and bewail the sin which had brought Him  
where He was, seeing He had come to suffer for it. And He would have   
them weep because that sin would bring them and their children into yet  
deeper woe.   
You know that just before He uttered this remarkable saying, the husbands, the fathers and the sons of those women had been crying with   
loud voices, Let Him be crucified, and when Pilate had taken water and   
washed his hands to show that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus,  
they had imprecated upon their nation, and upon their unborn sons, the   
curse which follows from such a deed. Then answered all the people, His   
blood be on us and on our children. And though these women lamented   
and mourned, yet over their heads, the men who had spoken for the nation had gathered the thunder cloud of Divine Wrath! Jesus points to it   
and says, Weep for the national sin, weep for the national curse which   
will surely come upon you, because you are putting the Just One to   
death.   
Yes, deeper, still, was His meaning, for all those about Him were, in a   
sense, guilty of His death. And you, and I, and all the rest of mankind  
have been, in our measure, the cause of the Saviors Crucifixion. Oh,  
Brothers and Sisters, this is the reason why we should weepbecause we   
have broken the Divine Law and rendered it impossible that we should be   
saved except Jesus Christ should die! If we have not believed in Jesus   
Christ, we have this cause for lamentationthat our sin abides upon us   
at this present moment! That curse which crushed the Savior down till He   
cried, Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani, is resting upon some who are here this   
morning!   
O Souls, you need not pity the dying Christ, but pity yourselves! On  
your own selves your sin is resting! And your children growing up unconverted, hardened in rebellion against God by your exampletheir sin is   
resting upon them, too, and this is the overflowing cause why you should   
weep! And you Believers, you from whom sin has been lifted, who are forgiven for His names sakeyet lament that you should have sinnedand   
with your joy for pardoned guilt mourn that Christ had to carry the burden which you heaped together and to bear the penalty which you deserved! All round, Brothers and Sisters, there is abounding cause for sorrow for sina sweet sorrow from the Lords people and a bitter sorrow   
from those who have no part nor lot in the result of Christs passion as   
yet, but who, nevertheless, are partakers in the crime which slew the Son  
of God!   
I beg you, now, to look again into the reason why our Lord bade them   
weep. It was, first, for their sin, but it was next for the impending punishment of their sins. The punishment of the national sin of the Jew was to be   
the scattering of his nation and the total destruction of its holy city! And   
well does our Savior speak of it in terrible language, for under all Heaven   
and in all history there never was such a scene of misery as the siege and   
destruction of Jerusalem! I need not give you any outline of it because you   
must be familiar with that painful subject where every horror seems to be   
combined in one and exaggerated to the utmost! Nothing has ever surpassed it! I question if anything ever equaled it.   
But our Lord, as I have hinted, looked further than the Roman sword and the massacre of the Jews. Often, in His preaching, you do not know whether He is talking of the siege of Jerusalem or of the Judgment Day, for the one was on His mind such a foreshadowing, rehearsal and type of the otherso that in His language He often seemed to melt the two into one. He means to you and to me, this morning, to speak, not of besieged Jerusalem, but of that Day of Wrath, that dreadful daywhat man among us shall be able to abide its coming? There is surely cause enough for weeping, for when that day comes it will find some men in such a state that it would have been better for them that they had never been born! When the dreadful sentence shall come from the Judge, Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels, they will bless the barren womb and the breast at which no child has sucked! Then will impenitent sinners bitterly exclaim, Cursed be the day when I was born! Let not the day when my mother bore me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto you; making him very glad. They will wring their hands in anguish and curse their existence and wish that they had never seen the light! So terrible will the doom of the wicked be, that mothers who looked upon the birth of their children as the consummation of their joy, shall wish they had been barren and never carried a babe at their breasts! They shall count those happy who were childless, whom, perhaps in their hearts, in their past lives they despised. Existence is, in itself, a blessing but what shall be the misery which shall make men wish that they had never breathed? Yet, alas, such is the condition of multitudes while I am speaking to you, and such will soon be the condition of some who are looking into my face now, unless they repent! Alas! Alas! Weep for yourselves and for your children!   
Further, our Lord went on, with that melting voice of His, in overflowing grief to say that they might reserve their tears for those who would, before long, wish to be annihilated, but wish in vain. Then shall men begin to say to the rocks, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us. The falling of the mountain would grind them to powder and they wish for that! The descent of the hill upon them would bury them in a deep abyss and they would rather be immured in the bowels of the earth forever than have to look upon the face of the Great Judge! They ask to be crushed outright, or to be buried alive sooner than to feel the punishment of their sins! Then shall be fulfilled the Word of the Lord by His servant, John, And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them (Rev. 9:6). Ah, Sirs, extinction is a blessing too great to be permitted to the ungodly! Earth will have no heart of compassion for the men who polluted her and rejected her Lord. The mountains will reply, We fall at Gods bidding, not at the petition of His enemies, and the hills, in their stolid silence, will answer, We cannot, and we would not if we could, conceal you from the Justice which you, yourselves, willfully provoked. No, there shall be no refuge for them, no annihilation into which they can fly! The very hope of it were Heaven to the damned. Oh, could they but expect it! But it must not, shall not be. Their cry for extinction shall be in vain.   
Now, if you have tears for Jesus dying, reserve them for those to whom death is but the beginning of evils! If you have griefs for Him to whom they said, Blessed is the womb that bore You and the paps that gave You suck, have still more tears for those who shall curse the hour in which they were conceived! Here is, indeed, a subject which demands the tears of nations and of agessouls lost beyond all remedy, seeking destruction, itself, as a blessing and beginning petitions of unutterable anguish which shall never cease and never be put into use! Then our Lord goes on to draw a wonderful parallel and contrast between His sufferings and those to be lamented, for He says, If they do these things in a green tree, what shall they do in the dry? I suppose He meant, If I, who am no rebel against Caesar, suffer so, how will those suffer whom the Romans take in actual rebellion at the siege of Jerusalem?   
And He meant, next, to say, If I who am perfectly innocent, must nevertheless be put to such a death as this, what will become of the guilty? If when fires are raging in the forest, the green trees, full of sap and moisture, crackle like stubble in the flame, how will the old dry trees burn which are already rotten to the core and turned to touchwoodand so prepared as fuel for the furnace? If Jesus suffers, who has no sin, but is full of the life of innocence and the sap of holiness, how will they suffer who have long been dead in sin and are rotten with iniquity? As Peter puts it in another place, For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begins with us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?   
Note well that the sufferings of our Lord, though in some respects far beyond all conceivable woes, have yet some points about them in which they differ with advantage from the miseries of lost souls. For, first, our Lord knew that He was innocent and, therefore, His righteousness upheld Him. Whatever He suffered, He knew that He deserved none of it. He had no stings of conscience, nor agonies of remorse. Now, the sting of future punishment will lie in the indisputable conviction that it is well deserved. If there were one woe in Hell more than a lost soul deserved, it would act as an opiate to its painbut the justice of every infliction will be the tooth of the worm, the edge of the sword. No dream of innocence, or conceit of self-righteousness will survive the Judgment Dayconscience will be awakened and armed to do its workthe wicked will perceive their guilt and cling to it and this will make their punishment the more severe. The finally impenitent will be tormented by their own passions which will rage within them like an inward Hell.

But our Lord had none of this! There was no evil in Him, no lusting after evil, no self-seeking, no rebellion of heart, no anger or discontent. A man in whom there is no evil passion to stir up cannot know those fierce pangs and wild throes with which raging sin feeds the soul. Pride, ambition, greed, malice, revengethese are the fuel of Hells fire. Mens selves, not devils, are their tormentors! Their inward lusts are worms that never die and fires that never can be quenched! There could be none of this in our Divine Lord. Again, lost souls hate God and love sin, but Christ ever loved God and hated sin.   
Now, to love evil is misery when undisguised and rightly understood sin is Hell. It is love of evil continued in the soul which causes the perpetuity of the lost estate of men. But the holy Jesus, though suffering beyond all conception, could not feel the pangs which come of hating good and loving evil. He was the green tree and the ungodly are the dry trees. Yet if the Innocent One suffers so, with what pains will guilty souls be racked by their avenging consciences? Our Lord Jesus knew that every pang He suffered was for the good of othersHe endured cheerfully because He saw that He was redeeming a multitude that no man can number from going down to the Pit. But there is no redeeming power about the sufferings of the lostthey are not helping anyone, nor achieving a benevolent design.   
The great God has good designs in their punishment, but they are strangers to any such a purpose. Our Lord had a reward before Him because of which He endured the Cross, despising the shame. But the finally condemned have no prospect of reward nor hope of rising from their doom. How can they expect either? He was full of hope, they are full of despair. It is finished was, for Him, but there is no, It is finished for them. Their sufferings, moreover, are self-causedtheir sin was their own. He endured agonies because others had transgressed and He willed to save them. Their sufferings are self-chosen, for they would not be persuaded to forsake their sins. But He, from necessity of love, was made to bleedthe cup could not pass from Him if His people were not redeemed. The torments of the lost will be self-inflictedthey are suicides to their soulsthe venom in their veins is self-created and self-injected. They torment themselves with sin to which they cleave, but it pleased the Father to bruise the Sonbut the necessity for His bruising lay not in Himself, but in others. Now, dear Friends, I think I have said enough on this painful matter to assure you that the most terrible warning to impenitent men in all the world is the death of Christ. For if God spared not His own Son, on whom was only laid imputed sin, will He spare sinners whose sins are actual and their own? If He smote Him to the death who only stood in the sinners place, will He let the impenitent sinner go free? If He who always did His Fathers will and was obedient even unto death, must be forsaken of God, what will become of those who reject Christ and live and die enemies to the Most High?   
Here is cause for weeping! And, very solemnly would I say it, God help me to say it so that you may feel itthe most dreadful thought is that perhaps we, ourselves, are in the condition of guiltiness before God and are hastening on to the judgment which Christ has foretold! Oh, think if within the next six monthsno, stretch it as far as you likeif within the next 50 years some of us should be asking the hills to cover us and wishing that we never had been born? What an awful prospect! And yet, unless we are renewed in heart and made Believers in Jesus Christ, that certainly must be our doom! Think of your children, too, who are growing up about you, capable of understanding and responsible for their actions. Oh, if they live as they now live, and die as they now are, you may wish they had never been given to you and had never borne your name! Think of this and weep!   
Dear Friends, if the Lord would put you into a right state of heart, you would scarcely think of an unconverted persons condition without the deepest pity. You would not hear an oath in the street without the tear starting in your eyes! That was a dreadful spectacle which I pictured to you just nowour Lord bearing His Cross and the women weeping. But how much more awful is that before me! I see a soul carrying about itself the instrument of its own destruction and going onward with it to its doom! Sin is the cross to which the soul will be fastened and habits and depravities are the nails! The soul is bearing its sin and loving to bear it! Look, it is going to execution, but at each step it laughs! Every step it takes is bearing it towards Hell and yet it makes mirth! Lo, the infatuated one scoffs at the voice that warns him and every scoff he utters is increasing his guilt!   
Look forward to his end, its never-ending end! Look forward to it steadily, with calm and tearful gazeis it not an awful spectacle? But what if you should be beholding yourselves as in a vision, or seeing your child in the glass of prophecy! If it is your case, I beseech you, repent of your sins, bewail your condition and fly to Christ for shelter! And if it is your child, give Heaven no rest! Plead continually at the Throne of Grace till you have brought down a blessing from God upon your offspring! Never cease to pray until your sons and your daughters are safely landed on the Rock of Ages and so secured there that they will need no other rock to hide them in the day when Christ shall come.   
I beseech you, beloved Christian Friends, ask for tenderness towards sinners, towards all sinners, and let your tenderness be shown in fervent prayer, in incessant effort and in holy sympathy towards the wandering ones. Alas, I have but stuttered and stammered compared with the manner in which I hoped to have spoken! I may have failed in expressing myself, but God can bless the word none the less! The subject is worthy of an angels tongue! It needs Christ, Himself, to expound it completely. Would God He might, by His Spirit, expound it to your hearts in the leisure of this afternoon. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 23:1-31.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK178, 265, 312.   
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CHRISTS PLEA FOR IGNORANT SINNERS   
NO. 2263

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JULY 3, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 5, 1890.

**Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34.**

WHAT tenderness we have here; what self-forgetfulness; what almighty love! Jesus did not say to those who crucified Him, Be gone! One such word and they would have all fled. When they came to take Him in the garden, they went backward and fell to the ground when He spoke but a short sentence! And now that He is on the Cross, a single syllable would have made the whole company fall to the ground, or flee away in fright.

Jesus says not a word in His own defense. When He prayed to His Father, He might justly have said, Father, note what they do to Your beloved Son. Judge them for the wrong they do to Him who loves them and who has done all He can for them. But there is no prayer against them in the words that Jesus utters. It was written of old, by the Prophet Isaiah, He made intercession for the transgressorsand here it is fulfilled! He pleads for His murderers, Father, forgive them.

He does not utter a single word of upbraiding. He does not say, Why do you do this? Why pierce the hands that fed you? Why nail the feet that followed after you in mercy? Why mock the Man who loved to bless you? No, not a word, even, of gentle upbraiding, much less anything like a curse. Father, forgive them. You notice Jesus does not say, I forgive them, but you may read that between the lines. He says that all the more because He does not say it in words. But He had laid aside His majesty and is fastened to the Cross and, therefore, He takes the humble position of a suppliant, rather than the more lofty place of One who had power to forgive. How often, when men say, I forgive you, is there a kind of selfishness about it? At any rate, self is asserted in the very act of forgiving. Jesus takes the place of a pleader, a pleader for those who were committing murder upon Himself. Blessed be His name!

This word on the Cross we shall use, tonight, and we shall see if we cannot gather something from it for our instruction, for, though we were not there and we did not actually put Jesus to death, yet we really caused His deathwe, too, crucified the Lord of Glory and His prayer for us was, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

I am not going to handle this text so much by way of exposition, as by way of experience. I believe there are many here to whom these words will be very appropriate. This will be our line of thought. First, we were, in a measure, ignorant. Secondly, we confess that this ignorance is no excuse. Thirdly, we bless our Lord for pleading for us and fourthly, we now rejoice in the pardon we have obtained. May the Holy Spirit graciously help us in our meditation!

I. Looking back upon our past experience, let me say, first, that WE WERE, IN A MEASURE, IGNORANT. We who have been forgiven, we who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we once sinned in a great measure through ignorance. Jesus says, They know not what they do. Now, I shall appeal to you, Brothers and Sisterswhen you lived under the dominion of Satan and served yourselves and sinwas there not a measure of ignorance in it? You can truly say, as we said in the hymn we sang just now

*Alas! I knew not what I did.*

It is true, first, that we were ignorant of the awful meaning of sin. We began to sin as childrenwe knew that it was wrong, but we did not know all that sin meant. We went on to sin as young menperhaps we plunged into much wickedness. We knew it was wrong, but we did not see the end from the beginning. It did not appear to us as rebellion against

God. We did not think that we were presumptuously defying God, setting at nothing His wisdom, defying His power, deriding His love, spurning His holiness, yet we were. There is an abysmal depth in sin. You cannot see the bottom of it. When we rolled sin under our tongue as a sweet morsel, we did not know all the terrible ingredients compounded in that deadly bittersweet. We were, in a measure, ignorant of the tremendous crime we committed when we dared to live in rebellion against God. So far, I think, you are with me.

We did not know, at that time, Gods great love for us. I did not know that He had chosen me from before the foundation of the world. I never dreamed of that! I did not know that Christ stood for me as my Substitute, to redeem me from among men. I did not know the love of Christdid not understand it. You did not know that you were sinning against eternal Love, against infinite compassion, against a distinguishing Love such as God had fixed on you from eternity. So far, we knew not what we did.

I think, too, that we did not know all that we were doing in our rejection of Christ and putting Him to grief. He came to us in our youth and, impressed by a sermon, we began to tremble and to seek His face. But we were decoyed back to the world and we refused Christ. Our mothers tears, our fathers prayers, our teachers admonitions often moved us but we were very stubborn and we rejected Christ. We did not know that, in that rejection, we were virtually putting Him away and crucifying Him! We were denying His Godhead, or else we would have worshipped Him. We were denying His love, or else we would have yielded to Him. We were practically, in every act of sin, taking the hammer and the nails and fastening Christ to the Cross, but we did not know it. Perhaps, if we had known it, we would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. We knew we were doing wrong, but we did not know all the wrong that we were doing.

Nor did we know fully the meaning of our delays. We hesitatedwe were on the verge of conversion, but we went back and turned, again, to our old follies. We were hardened, Christless, still prayerless, and each of us said, Oh, I am only waiting a little while till I have fulfilled my present engagements, till I am a little older, till I have seen a little more of the world! The fact is, we were refusing Christ and choosing the pleasures of sin instead of Himand every hour of delay was an hour of crucifying Christ, grieving His Spirit and choosing this harlot world in the place of the lovely and ever-blessed Christ! We did not know that.

I think we may add one thing more. We did not know the meaning of our self-righteousness. We used to think, some of us, that we had a righteousness of our own. We had been to Church regularly, or we had been to the Meeting House whenever it was open. We were christened; we were confirmed, or, perhaps, we rejoiced that we never had either of those things done to us. Thus, we put our confidence in ceremonies, or the absence of ceremonies! We said our prayers; we read a chapter in the Bible night and morning. We didoh, I do not know what we did not do! But there we restedwe were righteous in our own esteem. We had not any particular sin to confess, nor any reason to lie in the dust before the Throne of Gods majesty. We were about as good as we could be and we did not know that we were, even, then, perpetrating the highest insult upon Christ, for, if we were not sinners, why did Christ die? And, if we had a righteousness of our own which was good enough, why did Christ come here to work out a righteousness for us?

We made Christ to be a superfluity, by considering that we were good enough without resting in His atoning Sacrifice. Ah, but we did not think we were doing that! We thought we were pleasing God by our religiousness, by our outward performances, by our ecclesiastical correctness! But all the while we were setting up antichrist in the place of Christ! We were making out that Christ was not needed! We were robbing Him of His office and glory! Alas, Christ would say of us with regard to all these things, They know not what they do. I want you to look quietly at the time past wherein you served sin and see whether there was not a darkness upon your mind, a blindness in your spirit, so that you did not know what you did.

II. Well now, secondly, WE CONFESS THAT THIS IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE. Our Lord might urge it as a plea, but we never could. We did not know what we did and so we were not guilty to the fullest possible extentbut we were guilty enoughtherefore let us acknowledge it.

For first, remember, the law never allows this as a plea. In our own English law, a man is supposed to know what the law is. If he breaks it, it is no excuse to plead that he did not know it. It may be regarded by a judge as some extenuation, but the law allows nothing of the kind. God gives us the Law and we are bound to keep it. If I erred through not knowing the Law, still it was a sin. Under the Mosaic Law there were sins of ignorance and for these there were special offerings. The ignorance did not blot out the sin. That is clear in my text, for, if ignorance rendered an action no longer sinful, they why would Christ say, Father, forgive them? But He doesHe asks for mercy for what is sineven though the ignorance, in some measure, is supposed to mitigate the criminality of it.

But, dear Friends, we might have known. If we did not know, it was because we would not know. There was the preaching of the Word, but we did not care to hear it. There was this blessed Book, but we did not care to read it. If you and I had sat down and looked at our conduct by the light of the Holy Scripture, we might have known much more of the evil of sin, much more of the love of Christ, much more of the ingratitude which is possible in refusing Christ and not coming to Him.

In addition to that, we did not think. Oh, but, you say, young people never think! But young people should think. If there is anybody who need not think, it is the old man whose day is nearly over. If he thinks, he has but a very short time in which to improvebut the young have all their lives before them. If I were a carpenter and had to make a box, I would not think about it after I had made the box. I would think, before I began to cut my timber, what sort of box it was to be. In every action, a man thinks before he begins or else he is a fool. A young man ought to think more than anybody else, for now he is, as it were, making his box. He is beginning his life-planhe should be the most thoughtful of all men. Many of us, who are now Christs people, would have known much more about our Lord if we had given Him more careful consideration in our earlier days. A man will consider about taking a wife. He will consider about making a business. He will consider about buying a horse or a cow, but he will not consider about the claims of Christ and the claims of the Most High God! And this renders his ignorance willful and inexcusable.

Beside that, dear Friends, although we have confessed to ignorance, in many sins we did not know a great deal. Come, let me quicken your memories. There were times when you knew that such an action was wrong when you began it. You looked at the gain it would bring youand you sold your soul for that price and deliberately did what you were well aware was wrong. Are there not some here, saved by Christ, who must confess that, at times, they did violence to their conscience? They did despite to the Spirit of God, quenched the Light of Heaven, drove the Spirit away from them, distinctly knowing what they were doing! Let us bow before God in the silence of our hearts and acknowledge to all of this. We hear the Master say, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Let us add our own tears as we say, And forgive us, also, because in some things we did know. In all things we might have known, but we were ignorant for lack of thought, which thought was a solemn duty which we ought to have rendered to God.

One more thing I will say on this head. When a man is ignorant and does not know what he ought to do, what should he do? Well, he should do nothing till he does know! But here is the mischief of itwhen we did not know, yet we chose to do the wrong thing. If we did not know, why did we not choose the right thing? But, being in the dark, we never turned to the right, but always blundered to the left from sin to sin! Does not this show us how depraved our hearts are? Though we are seeking to be right, when we are left alone, we go wrong of ourselves. Leave a child alone. Leave a man alone. Leave a tribe alone without teaching and instruction what comes of it? Why, the same as when you leave a field alone! It never, by any chance, produces wheat or barley! Leave it alone and there are rank weeds, thorns and briarsshowing that the natural set of the soil is towards producing that which is worthless!

O Friends, confess the innate evil of your hearts as well as the evil of your lives, in that, when you did not know, yet, having a perverse instinct, you chose the evil and refused the good and, when you did not know enough of Christ and did not think enough of Him to know whether you ought to have Him or not, you would not have come to Him that you might have life! You needed light but you shut your eyes to the sun. You were thirsty but you would not drink of the living spring and so, your ignorance, though it was there, was a criminal ignorance which you must confess before the Lord. Oh, come to the Cross, you who have been there, before, and have lost your burden there! Come and confess your guilt, again, and clasp that Cross afresh! Come and look to Him who bled upon it and praise His dear name that He once prayed for you, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Now, I am going a step further. We were, in a measure, ignorant, but we confess that that measurable ignorance was no excuse.   
III. Now, thirdly, WE BLESS OUR LORD FOR PLEADING FOR US.

Do you notice when it was that Jesus pleaded? It was while they were crucifying Him. They had not just driven in the nails, they had lifted up the Cross and dished it down into its socketand dislocated all His bones so that He could say, I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint. Ah, dear Friends, it was then that, instead of a cry or groan, this dear Son of God said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. They did not ask for forgiveness for themselvesJesus asks forgiveness for them! Their hands were stained with His blood and it was then, even then, that He prayed for them! Let us think of the great love with which He loved us, even while we were yet sinners, when we were rioting in sin, when we drank it down as the ox drinks down water! Even then He prayed for us! While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Bless His name tonight! He prayed for you when you did not pray for yourself! He prayed for you when you were crucifying Him!   
Then think of His plea, He pleads His Sonship. He says, Father, forgive them. He was the Son of God and He put His Divine Sonship into the scale on our behalf. He seems to say, Father, as I am Your Son, grant Me this request and pardon these rebels. Father, forgive them. The filial rights of Christ were very great. He was the Son of the Highest. Light of Light, very God of very God, the second Person in the Divine Trinityand He puts that Sonship here before God and says, Father, Father, forgive them. Oh, the power of that Word from the Sons lips when He is wounded, when He is in agony, when He is dying! He says, Father, Father, grant My one request! O Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And the great Father bows His awful head in token that the petition is granted.   
Then notice that Jesus here, silently, but really pleads His sufferings. The attitude of Christ when He prayed this prayer is very noteworthy. His hands were stretched upon the transverse beam. His feet were fastened to the upright tree and there He pleaded! Silently His hands and feet were pleading and His agonized body from the very sinew and muscle pleaded with God! His Sacrifice was presented complete and so it is His Cross that takes up the plea, Father, forgive them. O blessed Christ! It is thus that we have been forgiven, for His Sonship and His Cross have pleaded with God and have prevailed on our behalf.   
I love this prayer, also, because of the indistinctness of it. It is, Father, forgive them. He does not say, Father, forgive the soldiers who have nailed Me here. He includes them. Neither does He say, Father, forgive sinners in ages to come who will sin against Me. But He means them. Jesus does not mention them by any accusing nameFather, forgive My enemies. Father, forgive My murderers. No, there is no word of accusation upon those dear lips. Father, forgive them. Now into that pronoun, them, I feel that I can crawl. Can you get in there? Oh, by a humble faith, appropriate the Cross of Christ by trusting in it and get into that big little word, them! It seems like a chariot of mercy that has come down to earth into which a man may stepand it shall bear him up to Heaven. Father, forgive them.   
Notice, also, what it was that Jesus asked forto omit that would be to leave out the very essence of His prayer. He asked for full absolution for His enemiesFather, forgive them. Do not punish them. Forgive them. Do not remember their sin. Forgive it, blot it out, throw it into the depths of the sea. Remember it not, My Father. Mention it not against them any more forever. Father, forgive them. Oh, blessed prayer, for the forgiveness of God is broad and deep! When man forgives, he leaves the remembrance of the wrong behind. But when God pardons, He says, I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more. It is this that Christ asked for you and me long before we had any repentance, or any faithand in answer to that prayer we were brought to feel our sin! We were brought to confess it and to believe in Him! And now, glory be to His name, we can bless Him for having pleaded for us and obtained the forgiveness of all our sins!   
IV. I come now to my last remark, which is thisWE NOW REJOICE IN THE PARDON WE HAVE OBTAINED.   
Have you obtained pardon? Is this your song?   
*Now, oh joy! My sins are pardoned,   
Now I can, and do believe.*   
I have a letter, in my pocket, from a man of education and standing, who has been an agnostic. He says that he was a sarcastic agnostic and he writes praising God and invoking every blessing upon my head for bringing him to the Saviors feet. He says, I was without happiness for this life and without hope for the next. I believe that that is a truthful description of many an unbeliever. What hope is there for the world to come apart from the Cross of Christ? The best hope such a man has is that he may die the death of a dog and that may be the end of him. What is the hope of the Roman Catholic when he comes to die? I feel so sorry for many devout and earnest friends, for I do not know what their hope is. They do not hope to go to Heavennot for some time, at any ratethey believe some purgatorial pains must be first endured. Ah, this is a poor, poor faith to die onto have such a hope as that to trouble your last thoughts! I do not know of any religion but that of Christ Jesus which tells us of sin pardoned, absolutely pardoned!   
Now, listen. Our teaching is not that, when you come to die, you may, perhaps, find out that it is all right, but, Beloved, now we are the sons of God. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. He has it now and he knows it, and he rejoices in it! So I come back to the last head of my discoursewe rejoice in the pardon Christ has obtained for us. We are pardoned! I hope that the larger portion of this audience can say, By the Grace of God, we know that we are washed in the blood of the Lamb.   
Pardon has come to us through Christs plea. Our hope lies in the plea of Christ and especially in His death. If Jesus paid my debtand He did it if I am a believer in Himthen I am out of debt. If Jesus bore the penalty of my sinand He did it if I am a Believerthen there is no penalty for me to pay, for we can say to Him   
*Complete Atonement You have made,   
And to the utmost farthing paid   
Whatever Your people owed.   
Nor can His wrath on me take place,   
If sheltered in Your Righteousness,   
And sprinkled with Your blood.   
If You have my discharge procured,   
And freely in my place endured   
The whole of wrath Divine   
Payment God cant twice demand,   
First of my bleeding Suretys hand,   
And then, again, at mine.*   
If Christ has borne my punishment, I shall never bear it! Oh, what joy there is in this blessed assurance! Your hope that you are pardoned lies in thisthat Jesus died. Those dear wounds of His bled for you!   
We praise Him for our pardon because we do know, now, what we did. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I know not how much we ought to love Christ because we sinned against Him so grievously! Now we know that sin is, exceedingly sinful. Now we know that sin crucified Christ. Now we know that we stabbed our heavenly Lover to His heart! We slew, with ignominious death, our best and dearest Friend and Benefactor! We know that, now, and we could almost weep tears of blood to think that we ever treated Him as we did! But, it is all forgiven, all gone! Oh, let us bless that dear Son of God who has put away even such sins as ours! We feel them more, now, than ever before. We know they are forgiven and our grief is because of the pain that the purchase of our forgiveness cost our Savior. We never knew what our sins really were till we saw Him in a bloody sweat. We never knew the crimson hue of our sins till we read our pardon written in crimson lines with His precious blood! Now we see our sin and yet we do not see it, for God has pardoned it, blotted it out, cast it behind His back forever!   
From now on ignorance, such as we have described, shall be hateful to us. Ignorance of Christ and eternal things shall be hateful to us. If, through ignorance, we have sinned, we will have done with that ignorance! We will be students of His Word. We will study that masterpiece of all the sciences, the knowledge of Christ Crucified. We will ask the Holy Spirit to drive far from us the ignorance that genders sin. God grant that we may not fall into sins of ignorance any more, but we may be able to say, I know whom I have believed and, henceforth I will seek more knowledge till I comprehend, with all saints, what are the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of Christ, and know the love of God, which passes knowledge!   
I put in a practical word here. If you rejoice that you are pardoned, show your gratitude by your imitation of Christ. There was never before such a plea as this, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Plead like that for others. Has anybody been injuring you? Are there persons who slander you? Pray, tonight, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Let us always render good for evil, blessing for cursingand when we are called to suffer through the wrong-doing of otherslet us believe that they would not act as they do if it were not because of their ignorance. Let us pray for them and make their very ignorance the plea for their forgivenessFather, forgive them; for they know not what they do.   
I want you to think of the millions in London just now. Think of those miles of streets, pouring out their children this evening! Think of those public houses with the crowds streaming in and out. Go down our streets by moonlight. See what I almost blush to tell. Follow men and women, too, to their homes, and be this your prayerFather, forgive them; for they know not what they do. That silver bellkeep it always ringing. What did I say? That silver bell? No, it is the golden bell upon the priests garments. Wear it on your garments, you priests of God, and let it always ring out its golden note, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. If I can set all Gods saints imitating Christ with such a prayer as this, I shall not have spoken in vain.

Brothers and Sisters, I see reason for hope in the very ignorance that surrounds us. I see hope for this poor city of ours, hope for this poor country, hope for Africa, China and India. They know not what they do. Here is a strong argument in their favor, for they are more ignorant than we were. They know less of the evil of sin and less of the hope! Send up this fiery shaft of prayer, straight to the heart of God, while Jesus, from His Throne, shall add His prevalent intercession, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.   
If there are any unconverted people here, and I know that there are some, we will mention them in our private devotion, as well as in the public assembly. And we will pray for them in words like these, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. May God bless you all, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON   
**LUKE 23:33-46; JOHN 19:25-30.**

We have often read the story of our Saviors sufferings, but we cannot read it too often. Let us, therefore, once again repair to the place which is called Calvary. As we just now sang

*Come, let us stand beneath the Cross,   
So may the blood from out His side   
Fall gently on us, drop by drop.   
Jesus, our Lord is crucified.*

We will read, first, Lukes account of our Lords crucifixion and death. Luke 23:33. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. They gave Jesus the place of dishonor. Reckoning Him to be the worst criminal of the three, they put Him between the other two. They heaped upon Him the utmost scorn which they could give to a malefactorand in so doing they unconsciously honored Him. Jesus always deserves the chief place wherever He is. In all things He must have the pre-eminence. He is King of sufferers as well as King of saints.   
34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. How startled they must have been to hear such words from One who was about to be put to death for a supposed crime! The men that drove the nails, the men that lifted up the tree must have been started back with amazement when they heard Jesus talk to God as His Fatherand pray for themFather, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Did ever Roman legionary hear such words before? I should say not. They were so distinctly and diametrically opposed to the whole spirit of Rome. There it was, blow for blowonly in the case of Jesus, they gave blows where none had been received. The crushing cruelty of the Romans must have been startled, indeed, at such words as these, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.   
34, 35. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. The gambling soldiers little dreamed that they were fulfilling the 22nd Psalm, which so fully sets forth our Saviors sufferings and which He probably repeated while He hung on the tree. David wrote, They parted My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture. And the people stood beholding, gazing, looking on the cruel spectacle. You and I would not have done thatthere is a public sentiment which has trained us to hate the sight of cruelty, especially of deadly cruelty to one of our own racebut these people thought that they did no harm when they stood beholding. They also were thus fulfilling the Scriptures, for the 17th verse of the 22nd Psalm says, They look and stare upon Me.   
35. And the rulers also with them derided Him. Laughed at Him, made Him the object of course jests.   
35, 36. Saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is Christ, the Chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar. In mockery, not giving it to Him, as they did later in mercy, but in mockery, pretending to present Him with weak wine, such as they drank.   
37. And saying, If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself. I fancy the scorn that they threw into their tauntIf You are the King of the Jewsthat was a bit of their own. Save yourselfthat they borrowed from the rulers. Sometimes a scoffer or a mocker cannot exhibit all the bitterness that is in his heart except by using borrowed terms, as these soldiers did.   
38*.* And a superscription also was written over Him in the letters of Greek, Latin and HebrewTHIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. John tells us that Pilate wrote this title and that the chief priests tried in vain to get him to alter it. It was written in the three current languages of the time, so that the Greek, the Roman and the Jew might, alike, understand who He was who was thus put to death. Pilate did not know as much about Christ as we do, or He might have written, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS AND OF THE GENTILES, TOO.   
39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed at Him, saying, If You are Christ, save Yourself and us. He, too, borrows this speech from the rulers who derided Christ, only putting the words, and us, as a bit of originality. If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.   
40-41. But the other answering rebuked him saying, Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly, for we receive the reward of our deeds: but this Man has done nothing amiss.

A fine testimony to ChristThis Man has done nothing amissnothing unbecoming, nothing out of order, nothing criminal, certainlybut nothing even, amiss. This testimony was well spoken by this dying thief.

42-46. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up His ghost. He yielded His life. He did not die, as we have to do, because our appointed time has come, but willingly the great Sacrifice parted with His lifeHe gave up the ghost. He was a willing Sacrifice for guilty men. Now let us see what John says concerning these hours of agony, these hours of triumph.

John 19:25. Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus His mother, and His mothers sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Last at the Cross, first at the sepulcher. No womans lips betrayed her Lord; no womans hands ever smote Him; their eyes wept for Him; they gazed upon Him with pitying awe and love. God bless the Marys! When we see so many of them about the Cross, we feel that we honor the very name of Mary.

26. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the Disciple standing by, whom He loved, He said unto His mother, Woman, behold your son! Sad, sad spectacle! Now was fulfilled the word of Simeon, Yes, a sword shall pierce through your own soul, also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Did the Savior mean, as He gave a glance to John, Woman, you are losing one Son, but yonder stands another who will be a son to you in My absence? Woman, behold your son!

27. Then said He to the Disciple, Behold your mother! Take her as your mother, stand in My place, care for her as I have cared for her. Those who love Christ best shall have the honor of taking care of His Church and of His poor. Never say of any poor relative or friend, the widow or the fatherless, They are a great burden to me. Oh, no! Say, They are a great honor to memy Lord has entrusted them to my care. John thought so let us think so! Jesus selected the Disciple He loved best to take His mother under his care. He selects those whom He loves best, today, and puts His poor people under their wings. Take them gladly and treat them well.

27 . And from that hour that Disciple took her into his own home. You expected him to do it, did you not? He loved his Lord so well.   
28. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. There was a prophecy to that effect in the Psalms, and He must fulfill it. Think of our dying Savior prayerfully going through the whole of the Scriptures and carefully fulfilling all that is there written concerning HimThat the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, I thirst.   
29, 30. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, For He did receive it. It was a weak kind of wine, commonly drunk by the soldiers. This is not that mixed potion which He refused, wine mingled with myrrh, which was intended to stupefy the dying in their painsWhen He had tasted thereof, He would not drinkfor He would not be stupefied. He came to suffer to the bitter end the penalty of sin and He would not have His sorrow mitigated. But when this slight refreshment was offered to Him, He received it. Having just expressed His human weakness by saying, I thirst, He now manifests His all-sufficient strength by crying, with a loud voice as Matthew, Mark and Luke all testify.   
30. He said, It is finished. What, it, was it that was finished? I will not attempt to expound it. It is the biggest, it, that ever was! Turn it over and you will see that it will grow, and grow, and grow, and grow till it fills the whole earthIt is finished.   
30. And He lowered His head, and gave up the ghost. He did not give up the ghost and then bow His head because He was dead. But He bowed His head as though in the act of worship, or as leaning it down upon His Fathers bosomand then gave up the ghost.  
Thus have we had two Gospel pictures of our dying Lord. May we remember them and learn the lessons they are intended to teach.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK561, 279, 278.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3068 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

UNKNOWN DEPTHS AND HEIGHTS   
NO. 3068

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON A LORDS-DAY EVENING IN THE YEAR 1861.

**Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34.**

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon Christs cries from the Cross (in addition to those mentioned later) are as follows: #2562, Volume 44CRIES FROM THE CROSS; #2803, Volume 48THE SADDEST CRY FROM THE CROSS; #2344, Volume 40 CHRISTS DYING WORDS FOR HIS CHURCH; #2311, Volume 39OUR LORDS LAST CRY FROM THE CROSS and #2644, Volume 45THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSSRead/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

IT needs a tongue as eloquent as that which uttered these words to fitly describe the scene before us. Christ, the King of kings, and yet the sorrowful Substitute for sinners, has been stripped naked. The mocking soldiers have unconsciously fulfilled the Scripture which said, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots. He has been thrown roughly to the ground. His legs and arms have been stretched out upon the transverse wood. Rough hands have grasped the cruel nails. Stern blows have been dealt with the heavy hammerHe now begins to know the physical sufferings of crucifixion. He looks down to the faces of the men who have been putting him to exquisite torture and to bitter shame and utters not a single word of complaint, much less of accusation or of vengeance. And He breathes a prayer, Father, forgive themMy murderers, the rough men who have stripped Me, the cruel men who have nailed My hands and pierced My feetFather, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Brothers and Sisters, the sayings of Christ upon the Cross have a deeper meaning than that which appears upon the surface. They were texts of which His eternal life should be the sermonthey were no common words. As no Word of Scripture is of private interpretation, no Word of the Savior upon the Cross loses its force and significance in later times. What He said then, He is saying now. What He said then was but the utterance of a sentence which shall roll through the ages and which shall prevail with God through time and throughout eternity. Father, forgive them, was the prayer of a dying Man, but it was not a dying prayer. They know not what they do, was the plea of lips that were about to be closed, but it was no plea which was doomed to silenceit is heard in Heaven today, as much as when Jesus first offered it on Calvary from His Cross!

The text seems to me to be of great depth. I shall not attempt to fathom it tonight, but reserve it for some future sermons, only tonight exploring two of its parts, rather flitting like a swallow across its surface, than like the leviathan stirring its depths. [Mr. Spurgeon carried out this intention

with Sermons #897, Volume 15THE FIRST CRY FROM THE CROSS and #2263, Volume 38 CHRISTS PLEA FOR IGNORANT SINNERSRead/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

There are two things in the text, the unknown depths of sinThey know not what they do. And the unknown heights of mercy, as manifested in Christs dying pleaFather, forgive them. May God grant His blessing while I shall endeavor to set forth both, according as the Spirit of God shall enable me to do so!

I. And first, my Friends, it appears from the text that THERE ARE UNKNOWN DEPTHS IN HUMAN INIQUITY. They know not what they do.

You will tell me, perhaps, that Christ applied this remark to His murderers who did not know that He was the Son of God, for if they had known Him to be the Messiah, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. And it might have been said to them, You did it ignorantly in unbelief. I grant you that this was the immediate meaning of Christs words, but I think, to return to what I have already affirmed, this saying is true of the entire human familywhenever any of us sin, we know not what we do. Do not misunderstand me. There is no man in the world who has not enough perception left to teach him the difference between right and wrong. Even upon the natural conscience of man there is engraved so much of the Law of God that his conscience either accuses or excuses him. I can scarcely think that there is any race of bushmen, or that there is a single tribe of aboriginal savages who have altogether lost that candle of the Lord which searches all the inward parts of the belly. They know enough to leave them without excuse, so that if they perish, they perish through willful sin. Yet I must admit, at the outset, that it is possible for the conscience to become so blind through prevailing customs, so seared through lengthened habit and so preserved through absolute ignorance, that men may sin and yet know not what they do. There may be some in whom the judgment has left its seatthey have become maniacs so far as any moral judgment is concerned. They sin with both their hands and, perhaps, write down that very sin as being righteousness, and their obscenity as being a sacrifice acceptable to God! There are none such, however, here. I think in a land like this, with an open Bible, with a preached Gospel, with the Presence of the Spirit of God, I need not address such an assembly as this as not knowing what they do in that sense. If you sin, my Hearers, you sin against light and knowledge. You sin knowing that you do wrong. You put out your hand to touch the accursed thing knowing that it is accursed. You sin willingly and many shall be your stripes, seeing that you know your Masters will and do it not! But still, of the whole human race it is nevertheless true that when they sin, they know not what they do. Let me show you, as briefly and forcibly as I can, how this is the fact.

Who among us knows, to the full, the real meaning and nature of sin? I can give some description to you of what sin is, but I question, Brothers and Sisters, whether even the most enlightened of us know the whole of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Sinner, I address myself pointedly to you. Do you know that when you sin, you call God a fool? You say that His Law is not the best thing for you, that He has made a mistake and has asked you to do that which would not conduce to your happiness. You call God a foolis that nothing? Do you know that when you sin, you call God a liar? He tells you that sin is a bitter and an evil thing. You say, No, it is sweet. It is pleasant. At any rate, I will taste it. You give the lie to the Eternal God! Is that nothing? Whenever you sin, you call God a tyrant. You do, in fact, avow that He has given Laws which are hard and arbitrary, which He ought not to have given and which you are determined to break because you feel that they are not for your happinessthey do not promote your comfort! And is this nothing? Is this nothingto call the all-wise God a fool, the truthful God a liar and the good and generous God a tyrant?

But there is more than this in your sin. Every time a man sins, he aims a blow at the crown of God. He refuses to let God be the King but puts his hand, his wicked hand, upon the diadem of Deity and would dash the crown from Gods head if he could. No, more! He aims a blow at Gods very existence. The language of sin is, No God! And every time a sinner sins, he tries to get rid of Godand his aim and drift is to stop the Eternal One and to put the King of kings out of His own universe. Is this nothing? Is this nothing? Does not even this, feeble though the explanation is, make sin to be exceedingly sinful? Verily, when we sin, we know not what we do! I can hardly believe that there is a man or woman in this assembly who would, in cold blood, stand up and say, I defy God! I will do my best to drive Him from His throne. Yes, and to drive Him from existence! And yet, Sinner, every time you curse, or lie, or swear, or break Gods Law in any way whatever, you do, in fact, do all these things and I think I may say you know not what you do.

Let us now shift the kaleidoscope and get another view of this great and solemn Truth of God. Some of us know what we do if we judge of sin by its loathsomeness in Gods sight. There is no man living who knows how much God hates and abhors sin! You may detest the loathsome toad. You may give way to a wicked disposition and hate some enemy till you cannot live till that enemy is slain. But you cannot loathe the toad, you cannot hate your foe so thoroughly as God abhors and hates sin! Wherever sin is, there is Gods utmost hate, anger and ire. He cannot endure it! His eyes cannot light upon it without burning it up and His hand is always longing to smite it to the death. Why, look Sirs, God had a choice archangela glorious being whose wings were like the beams of the rising sun, whose stature was like a great snow-clad mountain and whose beauty was as a fair field girt with flowers. He sinned and God spared neither him nor the angels that followed him in his rebellion, but cast them down to Hell and reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Angelhood could not save an angelangelic stature, a seraphic voice and a cherubic flight could not save Satan and his hosts when the stain of sin had fallen on them! How much, then, must God hate sin?

When God had made the world, He smiled and said, It is good. The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, for the world was very good and Gods own heart was glad at the sight of the new-made world. But when Adam sinned, God did not spare Eden, with all its perfections of beauty! And later, when the iniquity of man was fully ripe, He did not spare the round world itself, but bade the floods leap up from their cavernous darkness and bade the clouds burst their swaddling bands, and the earth was covered with a flood, for it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.

No, if we still want to see more clearly how God hates sin, let us see how sin came upon His own Son, His only-begotten, His well-beloved Son. It came there, not by any deed of His own, but because He took our iniquities upon Himself and, therefore, was numbered with the transgressors. And did His Father spare Him? Far from it! He smote Him with the rod, He scourged Him with the lash, He pierced Him to the heart with His sword. He gave up His darling to the power of the dog, and Lama Sabachthani? was a sorrowful proof that God hates and loathes

sin, let it be wherever it may. [See Sermon #2133, Volume 36MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Now, Sirs, would you go and press to your bosom and dandle and pamper and pet that thing which God loathes and hates? I think not. If we ever had, before our eyes, Gods hatred of sin and this were revealed to our heart by the Holy Spirit, we would long to be rid of it and, therefore, I say that when we take hold of it and embrace it, we know not what we do.

Again, what man among us knows sin in its awful consequences? Is there a mother here who would go home tonight and ask herself the quickest way to damn her childs soul? Is there a father here who would take counsel with his own wickedness as to the readiest method of sending his son to Hell? I think not. And yet, when the father is a drunk or a swearer, what does he do but do his worst to ruin his child? And when the mother is prayerless, Godless, Christless, does she not do her utmost to murder her childs soul? Verily, we in our relationships, when we go into sin, know not what we do! What master could sit down wantonly to undermine the spiritual health of his workmen? What citizen would wish to become the deadly upas tree dropping poison from all its branches? What man of influence would wish to be the basilisk whose eyes should tempt men to their destruction? Not one! And yet when you commit iniquityand especially those of you who occupy the responsible position of parents, or masters, or ministers, or employers in any way you do your best to destroy the souls of others! So I can truly say, Surely you know not what you do.

Do you know, Sinner, that every time you sin, your sin affects the whole world? Let me not stagger you. It is only our finite vision which prevents us seeing the effect of even one thought upon the entire universe. The word I am speaking, just now, sets in motion a wave in the air which reaches your ears. It will abide in your memory, to a certain degree, throughout eternity. In limiting the sphere of my voice to your ears, I have set eternity pulsatingyou shall think these things over either in the waves of fiery Hell, or in the fields of glorious Heaven. Eternity has been affected by the speech of a man! And so it is with what you dothere is an effect produced on earth, in Heaven, in Hell by whispered blasphemy or by an unseen lustyou cannot sin alone! You are part of a universeyou cannot disentangle yourself from the meshes of the net of society. You are in the ship of the universe and you cannot get out of it. You cannot even be thrown out of it, as Jonah was cast out of the ship into the sea. Your sin is dragging other men down to Hell, or else the Grace that is in you is helping to lift up others towards God and Heaven. Mind that when you sin, for from this day on I think that you will hardly be able to say as, perhaps, you may have done before, that you know not what you do.

But Sinner, let me speak to you solemnlyto youabout something in which no imagination is needed. Do you see that man yonder? What is he doing? I see a pearly gate within which I mark the splendors of unutterable bliss and hear the hymns of the Paradise of God! What is that man doing? He is putting bolts and bars upon that gate to shut himself out. Do you call him a madman? Sinner, that madman is you! Your sins are shutting you out of Heaven. Do you see yonder man? He is carrying wood on his weary shoulders and stooping to the very ground as he bears his burden. For what purpose is he carrying that fuel? It is to make a bed of fire on which he shall lie and swelter in flames forever! Do you call him a madman? Sinner, that madman is yourself! What is Hell but the laying on upon your back of a whip whose knots you have yourself tied? What is it but the drinking of a cup of gall, every drop of which was distilled from your own sin? These are awful things to say, but I feel that when I look at what Hell is, in all its horrors, and what the loss of Heaven is, with all its dreadful darkness, I must say to you when you sin, surely you know not what you do! The man who puts himself to death with the halter, or drives the knife into his heart, or throws himself into his watery grave may have some present griefs which may, to him, though not to us, seem to be an excuse for fleeing from them. But you, when you sin, are a suicide without excuse because you flee from good that stands before you to an evil that has no mixture of benefit or mercy! You leap into the fire yourselfa fire which you have yourself kindled and which your own blasphemous breath has fanned! Oh, may God teach us, when we sin, what we have really done, that we may not do it again and that, by His Grace, we may be led to the precious blood of Christ to have the guilt of it washed away!

*There is a fountain filled with blood,   
Drawn from Emmanuels veins.   
And sinners plunged beneath that flood   
Lose all their guilty stains.*

Only once more upon this point and then I will leave it. They know not what they do. Sinner, do you know that when you sin, eternity is involved in every act? Faith binds me to eternal blisssin and unbelief fetter me to everlasting woe. I think I hear the voice of a spirit which has been these last ten years in Hades. Listen! Listen! There is a cry, a groan, but now the words are audibleFool that I was to come here! Here I am tortured in indescribable agony that is to go on foreverand for what? For a few hours of giddy mirth, for a few silly jokes that I might indulge my pride rather than submit to the Free Grace of God. Why am I here? Because I would serve Satanand God knows that it was a bitter service and what little sweet it had is all forgotten now. Do you hear this man as he speaks to himself? Oh, if I could ever escape from this dreadful dungeon, it would be a Heaven to me! If these awful fires could be quenched, if this gnawing worm would but die, then I would be content! If after ten thousand, thousand, thousand years I could hope to make my escape from this pit of woe, it would set all the bells of my heart a-ringing for very joy at the bare possibility that, at last, I might escape! But what is it that I see written before me? Forever! Forever, on my chains! Forever, branded on my limbs of pain! Forever, on yon waves of fire! Forever, in the angry gaze of an incensed Deity! Forever, in those hungry depths which seem to yawn to suck me into deeper woe! Forever, forever, forever, forever! O drunkard, swearer, whoremongerwhen you sin the next time, remember that the deed you do entails everlasting consequences which will run on forever, forever, FOREVER! Surely, when you have sinned in the past, you must have been ignorant of this overwhelming Truth of Godyou could not have known what you were doing!

But have I some here who say that they do know what they are doing? They have been so faithfully warned, so affectionately dealt with, so earnestly prayed for that when they sinned, they sinned willfully, knowing what they did. O my dear Hearers, that is true of some of you! I have often felt, when I have come out of the pulpit, that you would be without excuse in the Day of Judgment. God knows that I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of GodDivine Sovereignty in all its absoluteness and the sinners responsibility in all its fullness! I have preached to you the Doctrines of Grace, but I have not, therefore, kept back the demands of God upon you. And I know that should you perish, it will neither be for want of preaching, nor of weeping. Well, Sirs, if you do perish with the Gospel preached in your ears, you perish fearfully indeed!

Room there! Roommake way you priests of Modoch! Stand back, you followers of Ashtaroth, you worshippers of Baal, stand back! Give up your choice seats, the highest places in the synagogue of Hell! Make room, for here comes a man who read his Bible and heard the Word faithfully preached! Give him the choicest place. Now cannibals, pirates and all you poor beings who sinned, but knew not what you did, make room, for here comes a man who sinned with God before his very eyes and blindly rushed upon the spear of the Almighty when the light of Heaven was shining upon his eyeballs! Make room for him, I say! Get up, you who have been guilty of murder and of the shedding of blood in lands where Christ was never preached! Get up and give your place to this man! What? they say, have you become like one of us? Yes, we say, not only like one of you, but deeper than your depth, more fiery than your flames, more horrible than your horrors shall be the dread, the doom, the destruction of this man of whom it could not be said, He knew not what he did. God have mercy upon you, my Hearers! May His Sovereign Grace be extended toward you. May the lines of His election embrace you, the blood of Christs redemption wash you, the voice of His effectual calling awaken you and the power of His Grace preserve you! Or alas, woe unto you, Newington! Woe unto you, Southwark! If the Gospel preached unto you had been preached in Sodom, it had continued unto this day! And if in Tyre and Sidonthey would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes!

I have thus tried, in all simplicity, as Gods servant, to expound Christs pleaFather, forgive them; for they know not what they do.   
II. Now, very brieflybut oh, may God grant that it may be with the unction of the Holy Onelet me speak upon THE UNKNOWN HEIGHTS OF GRACE.   
If there were any men in all the world who under the Covenant of Works, or under that mingle-mangle covenant which some preach, which is half Law and half works, and neither Law nor worksif there were any men who should have been excluded from the Election of Grace it was those men who nailed the Savior to the Cross! And yet, mark this, while Christ did not mention by name the best of the Pharisees, He did mention, before God, particularly and personally, those degraded men who with many an addition of cruel mockery, nailed Him to the Cross! Father, forgive

them. He did not say, Father, forgive Pontius Pilate, for he sinned unwillingly. He did not say, Father, forgive Judas, for he repented and cast down his ill-gotten gain in the Temple. But He said, Father, forgive them. There they arethe mark of the nails has not yet gone out of their handsthere is the print of the head of the nails in the center of their palm even now. Look, the blood of Jesus is on their clothesthe very blood which spurted forth from the Redeemers hands when they drove the nails through them! Yet He prays, Father, forgive them. There they arethey are grinning at their ghastly work and saying, Aha! Aha! and joining with the ribald crew and thrusting their tongues into their checks, saying, He saved others, Himself He could not save. And yet there is heard, above the clamor of their iniquity which appeals to God for justice, the cry of the Savior, Father, forgive them.   
There is no consciousness of need of forgiveness in them. Their hearts are hard as nether millstones. They laugh at the prayer itself. Forgive? they say, we have done many a worse piece of work than this! We need not be forgiven. They are as cold as ice and stern as steeland hard as the granite rock. And yet Jesus prays, Father, forgive them. There are no past good works to recommend themthey never did a good thing in their livesthey are soldiers who have slain, every man, perhaps his hundred men! They have learned to split a little infant on the blade of their swords. They know how to rip up, and tear, and cut off a head and gouge out eyesthey are men whose deeds of blood must be written in fire, but whose deeds of goodness have never yet come to light! And yet Jesus cries, Father, forgive them. They are men who if the Gospel were preached to them, would reject it. If Christ were offered to them, they would refuse Him. If they were moved by some qualms of conscience, they would stifle them. If they were wept over by the minister, they would ridicule his tears. If they were pleaded for by the Church, they would laugh at the pleas and yet the Savior says, Father, forgive them. Amid such splendors of Grace, where shall I find words to fitly describe them? Language, you are a dull, cold thing in such a case as this! Words, you have not strength enough to carry the mighty meaning of my soul just now! Was there ever Grace like this, except, when Jesus prayed for me and said, Father, forgive him? And when He prayed for you, my Brother, and you, my Sister, and said, Father, forgive them?  
O my Hearers, when Jesus pleads for us, it is not because there is anything in us why He should plead! It is not because we flee to Him that He pleads for us! It is not because we long for mercy and value it that He pleads for us. He prays for us long before we pray to Him! He died for us before we knew anything about our death in sin. And He lived and pleaded before His Fathers Throne when we were cursing, blaspheming and defying Him. Ah, Souls, I would that you could get rid, once and for all, of any idea that Jesus Christ needs anything in you to move His heart of compassion towards you! Where He loves, He loves for His own sake, not because of the worthiness of the object of His love. The source of Grace is in the God of Grace, not in the receiver of Grace! The reason for pardon is not in the penitent, but in the Pardoner. The ground of acceptance is not in our faith, but in Christ, the Author and Finisher of that faithand hence it is that the Gospel is adapted to the worst of sinnersto the scum, the chaff, the off-scouring, the parings, the filth, the vileness, the rottenness, the stench, the offal of the world! Oh, if we had a Gospel that was half Grace and half human goodness, then the good, the upright, the educated, the refined, the moral would have some degree of hope! But the poor outcast would have none. But now, tonight, I preach a Gospel which comes right down to you, just where you are, in the bog, the mire, the slough, next door to Hell, lying at Hells gatenot like Lazarus when the dogs licked his sores at the rich mans gate, but lying at the gate of Hell while Hell hounds lick your woundscast out from God, abhorred, detested, abhorrent to yourself, obnoxious to your own consciencesuch a sinner that you wish you had never been born, or that you had been a viper, a snake, a toad rather than have been a man! Yet can Gods Grace reach even you and unto you is the word of this salvation sent. I do believe that over such sinners as you Jesus pleads tonight, Father, forgive them.   
And now, my dear Hearers, is there something in you which seems to say, Unite in that prayer? Does the Spirit of God whisper in your soul, Tonight is the hour of mercy. Jesus Christ is passing byHe is interceding for the transgressors? Then I pray you say, Father, forgive me. What? Shall my Master say, Father, forgive them, and will not you pray for yourself? The adamant might melt, the steel dissolveand will not you melt? Spirit of God, bring the fire and melt the heart! And now, poor Soul, say, Father, forgive me. I did not know the full guilt of my sin, but I knew enough to make me so guilty that I deserve Your wrath. I have no merits, Lord. I have no righteousness. If You slay me, You are just. If You curse me, I deserve it. But Father, forgive me! Do not use Christs pleathat is His, not yours. He could say, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. You must use another plea. Father, forgive me through Your Sons precious blood.   
Oh, I think my soul would be ready to leap from earth to Heaven if I could but be sure that there was someone here who was saying in his heart, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and am no more worthy to be called Your son. Or if some heart were saying, By His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, Father, forgive me! Soul, your prayer is heardgo, and sin no more. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you.   
Go home and tell your friends and your kinsfolk what God has done for your soul and, by-and-by, come here and tell us what God has done for youand then come to this Communion Table and spiritually eat with us of His flesh and drink of His blood, for His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed.   
May the Lord add His blessing, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 136.**

[Sermon #787, Volume 13A SONG, A SOLACE, A SERMON AND A SUMMONS is a sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the whole of this Psalm,  
although he used as a text, the refrain, for His Mercy endures forever.Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

This is, indeed, one of the chief songs of praise which we find in the Scriptures. And it is not surprising that such a poet as John Milton should have written that version of it that we often sing

*Let us with a gladsome mind,   
Praise the Lord, for He is kind:   
For His mercies shall endure,   
Ever faithful, ever sure.*

Verses 1-3. O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good, for His mercy endures forever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for His mercy endures forever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for His mercy endures forever. Here, you see, we have three titles of God, first as Jehovah, secondly as the Elohim, thirdly as the Adonai or Lord. By whatever name God is known, He is worthy of our highest praise. Whether it is the name referring to His Self-Existence, or the name relating to His Covenant engagements, or the name applying specially to His rule and governorshipin any and every capacity, let us praise Him. Notice that each of these three verses begins, O give thanks. We are to praise the Lord for His greatness and to give Him thanks for His goodness. Our praise shall consist largely of the element of gratitude as we think of all that He has done for us. Although I lay no stress upon the fact of these verses being three and upon the names of God being three, yet it is very remarkable that throughout the Old Testament, even when there is no distinct allusion to the Doctrine of the Trinity, yet still the threefold praise is constantly being repeated, as if this sublime Truth of God lay latent, but yet was not unknown to those godly ones who dived deep into the mystery of the Triune Unity of God. Let us who have this Truth so clearly revealed to us, give thanks unto the Triune Jehovah with all the powers of our threefold naturebody, soul and spirit.

4, 5. To Him who alone does great wonders: for His mercy endures forever. To Him that by wisdom made the heavens: for His mercy endures   
forever. [See Sermon #1981, Volume 33GOD THE WONDER-WORKERRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The making of the

heavens is a great marvel of wisdom and, inasmuch as that wondrous work sprang from the unaided wisdom of God, it is a subject for which we should unceasingly praise Him. When men invent some notable piece of machinery, they are generally long in bringing it to perfection and they usually borrow various ideas from those who have preceded them. But it was not so with God. By His own perfect Wisdom, He struck out the arch of Heaven and made all that it covers.

6. To Him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for His mercy endures forever. Once in the history of the globe, the earth and the waters were mingled together but, at Gods bidding, the earth rose to its assigned position and the deeps received the sea and they have kept their places ever since, except when God caused the Flood to cover the whole earth.

7-9. To Him that made great lights: for His mercy endures forever: the sun to rule by day, for His mercy endures forever. The moon and stars to rule by night, for His mercy endures forever. What should we have been without light? Could any poor unhappy creatures ever have lived in a dark world? Let us praise God for the light! Let us bless Him for the sunthat great mercy, but let us not forget the lesser merciesthe moon and the stars which He also made. It is well, when we are praising God, to dwell upon all His bounties for, sometimes, mercies which appear small from one point of view become all the greater from another point of view. Stars seem little to us, but what vast orbs they really are! Let us praise the great Creator for every kind of light that He has made, and let us especially praise Him for all spiritual light, and even for His ministers who are stars in His right hand. They are but little twinkling lights compared with the great Sun of Righteousness, but still, He made the stars also. Therefore let Him have due praise for it, for His mercy endures forever. So far, we have been reminded of the wonders worked by the great Creator. Now we are called upon to give thanks to the Lord for His deliverance of His ancient people out of Egypt.

10-14. To Him that smote Egypt in their first-born: for His mercy endures forever: and brought out Israel from among them: for His mercy endures forever: with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm for His mercy endures forever: to Him which divided the Red sea into parts: for His mercy endures forever: and made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for His mercy endures forever. It was a great miracle by which the Red Sea was divided. I suppose it was somewhere about eight or nine miles in breadth at the place where the Israelites crossed it, yet the sea rolled back and stood in a heap on either side and left a clear passage for the people through the very heart of the sea! Gods mercy made a way for His people through the sea, and a path for them through the mighty waters. But it was no less a mercy to make them go through the sea. They had not been accustomed to any kind of travelling and certainly not to such travelling as thatthrough the heart of the seabut the Lord inspired them with confidence, so that they went down into the very depths without fear and came up again on the other side! But Gods mercy is always consistent with His justice, so there was very different treatment for the Egyptians.

15, 16. But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for His mercy endures forever. To Him which led His people through the wilderness: for His mercy endures forever. In this Psalm you have three leadings. There is, in verse 11, leading outBrought out Israel. In verse 16 there is leading throughLed His people through the wilderness. And in the 21st verse we shall find that there is leading intoAnd gave their land for an heritage. So God leads us out from the region of sin, He leads us through the wilderness of this lifes trial and He leads us into the rest which remains for His people. To Him which led His people through the wilderness: for His mercy endures forever. You are today, dear Friends, experiencing that kind of leading. Long ago some of you were led out of the realm of sinnow you are passing through this great and terrible wilderness wherein there would be thirst and hunger were it not for the heavenly water and manna. And we might fear the fiery serpents were it not for Him who was lifted up upon the Cross as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Yet the Lord will safely lead you through the wilderness and give you the land of promise.

17. To Him which smote great kings: for His mercy endures forever. His mercy and His vengeance are quite compatiblethe one has not done away with the other.

18-20. And slew famous kings: for His mercy endures forever: Sihon king of the Amorites: for His mercy endures forever: and Og the king of Bashan for His mercy endures forever. Here are four verses where we think that one might have sufficed. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, we often use only one verse when we ought to use four! Scripture sets us a better exampleit frequently repeats its references to some one thing because in that one thing there are included many mercies. It would be well if the diligence in describing details which we use with regard to our troubles could be exercised upon descriptions of our mercies, for then we would imitate the Psalmists style and say, O give thanks to Him which smote great kings: for His mercy endures forever: and slew famous kings: for His mercy endures forever: Sihon king of the Amorites: for His mercy endures forever: and Og the king of Bashan. [See Sermon #1285, Volume 22

SIHON AND OG, OR MERCIES IN DETAILRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

21, 22. And gave their land for an heritage: for His mercy endures forever: even an heritage unto Israel His servant: for His mercy endures forever. Here we have the same thought put into two verses, to show us how to dwell with lengthened notes and repeated Hallelujahs upon the goodness and mercy of God. Notice how many of these verses begin with, And, as if every mercy had been linked to another which went before it and would be linked to another which would come after it. I like to see these Ands. They remind us that there is more to follow. After all that we have received from God, there is yet more to come! God has not come to the end of His mercies.

23, 24. Who remembered us in our low estate, for His mercy endures forever: and has redeemed us from our enemies: for His mercy endures forever. Redemptionwhat a grand note that is! What voice can ever reach its fullness and its loftiness! Let us praise the name of the Lord as we remember the price and the power with which He has redeemed us from our enemies.

25. Who gives food to all flesh. There is food for you, then, poor hungry one! There is food for you, child of God. He who gives food to all flesh, can certainly give food to all spirits.

25, 26. For His mercy endures forever. O give thanks unto the God of Heaven: for His mercy endures forever.   
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3558 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A PLEA FROM THE CROSS   
NO. 3558

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 1917.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THE LORDS-DAY EVENING, JANUARY29, 1871.

**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34.**

To the godly heart there is a brighter light on Calvary than anywhere else beneath the sun. He who often resorts to Golgotha, if his spirit is right, must be wise. It is the University of Saints! He who would know sinits heinousness, its penaltymust see the Son of God making Expiation for it by His death on the accursed tree. He who would know lovethe love which many waters cannot quench, and which the floods cannot drownmust read it in the Saviors faceor, if you will, written in crimson lines in the Saviors heart, pierced with the spear. He who would know how he may get his sin forgiven, must resort to the Cross. There, and there only, is seen the way by which sin can be pardoned and the sinner accepted with God! And he who, finding pardon there, would seek to be useful to his fellow men and bring them into the same condition, must, himself, keep near that Cross, that he may speak much of it and, in the power of it, may be able to persuade and to prevail with the sons of men. Abide at the Cross, Belovedthere is no air so healthy and quickening as that which is breathed there! There was the birthplace of your hope! There its native air! There must be on earth, the climax of your joy! Live upon a Crucified Savior as you live by a Crucified Savior!

And now this word which we hear at Calvary, the first word of our Savior after He had been fastened to the Crossthis word I shall not attempt to fathom, or go into the depths of it, but shall rather touch the surface of it, skimming it, and uttering a few such sentences, as it were, one after the other that have arisen to my mind while listening to the voice of our Lord in this, His plaintive cry, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. I will suppose that I have many here, and I fear I need not make it a supposition, who as yet are unpardoned, unreconciled to God. Will you come with me and make a pilgrimage to Calvary? Will you look at your Savior? He has just come up the hill of doom! They have thrown Him upon His back. There is the Crossthe executioners have stretched out His hands and His feetthey have taken the nails they have driven them through His hands and feet! He is fastened to the wood, and now as they are lifting Him up, before it jars into the ground, you hear Him cry, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. I want you to learn a few lessons out of this. And the first shall be, see here

I. THE SAVIORS LOVE TO SINNERS.   
It is His last hour, but He thinks of them! He had searched for them in His health and strength. He went about doing good. He came to seek and to save the rebellious and He had spent His active life in their service. He is about to die, but the ruling passion is strong in death. He is still seeking sinners and if He can preach no more, yet He can pray! And if He will not speak to them, yet He can speak to God for them, and so He continues to show which way His heart runs, by the prayer for those that nailed Him to the wood, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. He had been 30 years in their midst and His holy soul had been much vexed by them. He had endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, but you see He has not cast them offHe has not turned His love to wrath. He is not weary of them, but He still pleads, Father, oh, forgive them. What love is this! One would suppose that the pain which He then felt might have distracted His mind from others, and His prayer might have been for Himself, that patience might be given, that strength might be sustained! But no, oblivious of Himself, His only care is still for those He seeksthe sinful sons of men! Just as an arrow from a bow shot forth with such force that it speeds onward to its target, His whole strength and soul speeds onward to the mark of the salvation of the sons of men! One thing, one thing only, does He doHe seeks their good! And I say again, if not now by active ministering to them, yet by ministering for them, He prays Father, forgive them. It is one thing to love persons at a distance and to have philanthropic desires for their goodit is quite another thing to live with them and still have the same fondness towards them. And it is quite another thing by far to receive bad treatment from themcontumely, scorn and a worse thing even than that, to be about to receive your death from themand still to pray for them! But such is the perseverance of Jesus love that it cannot be turned aside. They have spit into His face, but still He prays for them. They have scourged Him with their cruel lashes. They have hounded Him along the streets. They have, at last, pierced His hands and feet, and stripped Him! And they now hang Him up upon the Cross between Heaven and earthbut still nothing can diminish the flame of His love, nor turn aside His hearts desire from themit is still for them He lives, for them He dies. Father, oh, forgive them, is the sign and proof that He is still holding to the one great work He undertook! Now I would, O Sinner, I would that you would learn this lesson. Herein is love, behold what love! Will you not come and share in it? What keeps you back? Can you hold your heart from Immanuel? Can you refuse to love such a dear lover of the sons of men? I think if our hearts were not adamant or worse, they would melt at the sight of the pleading love of Jesus upon the Cross. Come, Soul, have done with your hardnesslet a drop of Christs blood melt that heart of yours! Have done with your carelessnesslet a spark of love set your heart on fire towards Him! Are you afraid to come, afraid of Him who died for sinners, afraid of love, terrified at mercy? Oh, be not so, but come and welcome! Put your trust in Him who, with His dying breath, proves the strength of His Almighty love by pleading for His foes! Let that stand for the first remark. Here is the strong love of Christ. Here, next, we see

II. HOW LOVE SHOWS ITSELF.   
How did Jesus prove His love in this last great moment? It was by prayer! Love shows itself in prayer. Prayer, alone, would not be a sufficient proof of love, but He who dies and prays, whose life is a prayer, and whose death is a prayer, proves His love by adding to His life and death the vocal utterance of both in this cry, Father, forgive them. If Jesus Christ would prove His love to you, He does it by praying for you. Observe, then, the extreme value of prayer. It is a ripe fruit of the Cross. It is, if I may call it so, a golden apple of the Crossintercessory prayer! See, then, Sinner, the need there is for you to pray. If Jesus prays and proves His love by prayer, and if the saints on earth who love you pray for you, depend upon it, prayer is no light thing. Bend those knees of yours, lift your eyes to Heaven and let a prayer go up from the depths of your spirit, Father, forgive me! Your Son has prayed, so pray I. He says, Father, forgive them, and I pray, Father, forgive me. Ought not this to bring every sinner to his knees? Would it not, if men were in their senses? Would not the sight of a dying Christ pleading for the guilty make the guilty plead? Oh, who can restrain prayer for himself when Jesus leads the way? When He says, Forgive them, will you not say, Amen? Oh, deserve you not right well to perish if you cannot join your assent to the Divine Intercession of the pleading Savior! Sinner, I beseech you now, in the secret of your soul, to pray, Father, forgive me. God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Is there no woman, is there no man, that could pray that now? You need not speaklet but your lips move. But, oh, since Jesus Christ tonight is set forth before you in the delightful attitude of an Intercessor praying for the guilty, I implore you pray for yourselvesand may God send you, this night, an answer of peacemay your pardon be signed and sealed to the comfort of your spirit!   
And now leaving that observation, we pass to the next. We saw the love of Jesus. We saw how that love shows itself in prayer. See next   
III. WHAT IT IS THE SAVIOR ASKS.   
He asks forgiveness, Father, forgive them. If the Savior should pray for all of us here present, He need not amend that prayer. It was suitable to those who nailed Him to the tree. They needed pardon for the murder of their Savior. It was suitable to the clamoring multitude, who had said, Crucify Him, crucify Him. They needed forgiveness for that blood which they then brought upon themselves, but it is equally suitable to each one here present, Forgive them. May I ask you to look back upon your past lives? Have you been kept from grosser sins? Thank God for it, but your sins of heart, of mind, of tongue, your sins of omission. What? Are these nothing? God grant you may feel them to be something and may you feel, tonight, that what you need is even as if you had been an open offenderyou need forgiveness and if, perchance, there are some here who have gone into open sin with a high hand and an outstretched arm, yet, my Brother, yet my Sister, this prayer needs no enlargement to suit you, Father, forgive them. Father, forgive them, forgiveness covers all! A man receipts a bill. He puts his name at the bottom. If that bill were for ten thousand pounds or ten pence, it is the same, the receipt has covered alland Jesus hand, when He puts it with the bloody red nail prints upon the great record of our sins, draws a red line down the page and blots out the wholeand leaves not a single sin on the page! Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow. Oh, the greatness of that word, forgiven! Blessed be the Lord Jesus for praying such a prayer as that! Do you know, I do not think it need be altered for the best man and the best woman here, for even our best things need forgiveness. When you have prayed the best prayer you ever prayed, you might well ask God to forgive it! If you have preached the best sermon you ever preached, you may ask to be forgiven it, for some sin has mingled with your holiest action, so forgiveness is needed at best, and always needed at the worstneeded today, tomorrow and all through life, and needed when the breath leaves the bodyalways needed that blessed prayer that sweeps the compass of mortal existencethat comprehends so much, Father, forgive them. This is the great thing love asks, for the forgiveness of those for whom she pleads. But passing on you will observe   
IV. FOR WHOM IT IS THAT OUR SAVIOR, IN THIS CASE, OFFERED THE PETITION. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Now that little word, them, is a great word because it is so little. Father, forgive them. The Savior is explicitHe does not mention the names of the four soldiers who pierced His hands and feet. No. He meant them, but He meant more. He does not mention the names of these in the crowd who were gazing upon Him with insolent stareHe meant them. He does not mention those that had cried, Crucify Him, crucify HimHe had meant them. He does not say, Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they didfor that would look as if He only prayed for sins that had already been committed. He does not say, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they shall do, for that would look as if He only prayed for sins that would be committed! But He says, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. And putting it thus in the present, it seems as though the petition had one hand to reach out to the past sins of mankind before He died, and another hand to the sins to come of mankind after He had offered the Sacrifice. They know not what they do. It is put so indefinitely, the, them, and the, do, the tense of the verb and the pronounthey are so indefinite that I bless God for the wide extent of their range! Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Who, then, is included in that word, them? I venture to say every man that is willing to be includedevery man that feels he is included! Did you slay Christ? Have your sins caused Him to die? Do you know, tonight, that your sins fastened Him to the cruel tree? Could you join in the hymn we sung just now? Then, when Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, He included you in that prayer, and me in that prayer, and tens of thousands besides in that word, them.   
Yet, yet you will observe in that word He put it specially. He does not exclude any, but He does include some more peculiarly than others, for His prayer is for those who knew not what they did. Can I get in there? I think I can. I believe that most here present can. I do not think all the sons of men canJudas, for instance, I fear he did know what he did, and deliberately sold his Lord and Master. I am half afraid that Pilate, to a great extent, knew what he did, and there are some of whom it is written, There is a sin unto death; I do not say that you shall pray for it. A great Doctrine, but it is in the Worda terrible Doctrine, but there it stands! You know how Peter put it in that first sermon. He said, I know, my brethren, that through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulersas if he felt that had they known what they did, their sin had been unpardonable. And the Apostle Paul, himself, speaking of his own persecution, said, Because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief. There is a deliberate Crucifixion of Christ as Christ, knowing what you are doingdoing it out of sheer malice to the Christ of God, out of intense hatred to Him, to Him personallywhich is unpardonable, for this reason, that the man who commits it never repents. Could he repent, the pardon were sure, but the capacity to do that argues incapacity to ever be made penitent. The man is given over, hardenedhe perishes in his sin!   
But the Lord Jesus in this prayer felt that those around Him did not know what they were doingthe most of them did not know He was Gods Son. They would not have crucified Him had they knownthey would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. They did knowmost of them knewthat He was a righteous Man and they must have felt they were doing very wrong in putting Him to death, but they did not recognize Him as the Messiah and as the Son of Godotherwise the most of them would have held back their hand. Now, though I have sinned against light and knowledge, and you have done the same, my Brothers and Sisters, yet in our past sin we did not deliberately intend to put Christ to death. We did not, like Satan of malice propense, desire to overthrow the Kingdom of God and Christ. Blessed be God, He saved us from that! We went far, very far, horribly far, but restraining Grace kept us back from that, and the Savior puts it theremakes such the object of His prayer. I do not say He excludes those who did it knowingly, but He does include peculiarly those who did not know what they didwhose sin, to a great extent, as to its far-reaching heinousness was wrapped in ignorance. He says, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Then the prayer of love is offered for a vast company of sinners in darkness and ignorance, who have sinned, but who have not been allowed utterly, knowingly, willfully, viciously to crucify the Son of God and put Him to an open shame!   
Now I want you to notice what this prayer of love admits. There is something in it that ought never to be forgotten. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. You see, then, this prayer, even of a patient, loving, gentle Savior, who wishes to plead all He can on the behalf of those for whom He praysthis prayer admits that they need to be forgiven who have sinned ignorantly. Some people have thought, If I did not know it to be sin to the full extent, then it was not sin. Ah, not so! It was sin, for Christ asks to have it forgiven! If I, doing what I did not fully understand, yet did wrong, I am not excused the wrong because I did not know to the fullest extent how wrong it was. I am just as guilty as if I did know, from some points of view, though not from others, but from any point of view, I still need to be forgiven. Ignorance of the law does not prevent the guilt of him who breaks it. As you know, my Brothers and Sisters, human law, the law of the land, for instancenever takes ignorance of the law as a complete excuse for the breach of the law! The laws of England always assume that every man knows the law. The law is madeit is a public law and he who breaks it cannot go before the Magistrate and sayI did not know it was the law; you must discharge me. The Magistrate may, as a

man, say, Well, if you did not know it was law, there is some excuse for you. As a Magistrate, he must not say that, for the law judges the man on its own self as publicly known, and does not allow for the excuse of not knowing the law.   
If the Savior, in His infinite mercy, said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, it was a pleaof course, but not a plea of law. Sinai has no room for that excuse, for Sinai says, If you dont know, you ought to have known. And in this particular case, especially, if they did not know Christ to be God, they ought to have known it. The prophecies were so clear. The Person of Christ so exactly fitted in to every type and every prophetic declaration, that it was a willful blindness that had happened unto Israel. They ought to have known it. One sin is never an excuse for another sin. It was a sin for them not to know! That sin, therefore, did not excuse them for committing the other. It is only Sovereign Grace that brought that in as a pleait is not justice, nor is it lawit the heart of mercy that pleads that.   
What I want you to notice, now, then, is though I did not know when I sinned as child and as a young man all that was meant by sin, though I especially did not know that I was crucifying Christ, yet the guilt is just the same as before God, and I need to be forgiven for it, or else it will be laid to my charge and I shall be punished as surely as Gods Law stands fast. Do you think the Savior would say, Father, forgive them, if it were not a wrong? He never prayed a superfluous prayer! The prayer, Forgive, is a sentence in itself, teaching us that sins of ignorance are sins. Oh, my dear Hearers, there are none of us who know to the full extent the sin of our sin! The most tender heart here does not know the blackness of its sin! I have sometimes talked with persons under conviction who have told me what dreadful sinners they were, and they have looked a little surprised when I have said, But you are ten times worse than you think you are. No, they scarcely thought that could be possible, yet I would venture to say that to the most tender-hearted penitent that ever lived, you have no idea, my Friend, of the aggravation of your sin, nor is it possible you should have, nor do I know that it is desirable. So long as you know enough of your sin to hate it, and to flee to Christ for the pardon of it, that will suffice. But, oh, the scholarship that would be needed to understand all the depths of sin, it were the scholarship of the Cross over againyou would have need to die like Christ to know what sin means in its infinite, its boundless guilt! Do not ask to know that, but do pray that the Lord would search you and forgive you your sins. You did not know of pardoned sins you have committed, manifold sins that have passed by your notice, that you have not observed and, consequently, could not have confessed in particular. Beseech the Savior, whose cry is, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, to pray for unknown mercy by His unknown agony for your unknown sin! It is a wondrous prayer, this, but we cannot stay much longer on it.   
We make yet another remark, Father forgive them for they know not what they do.   
V. THIS PRAYER WARNS US.   
I have felt intense pleasure in thinking it over, but at the same time that pleasure has been mingled with great bitterness. There is such a warning there, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do It does not say, as I have already said, that if they did know, Christ would not pray for them, but it does seem to hint that. In the background I see a somethingnot that every sin committed against light is unpardonableGod be thanked that is not so, but some sins committed against light and knowledge so harden the heart that the man never repents! He never will, he will go to Hell hardened like steel! And I am afraid some of you are in great likelihood of committing it. Those who have not heard the Gospel cannot very readily commit this, unless their conscience has been desperately violated, but some of you who have been hearers often, and perhaps were once professorswho have knowingly chosen the wrong path and have deliberately sacrificed your character for drink or gain or lustI will not say that you have passed that boundary, but I do tremble as I hear the booming of that text, There is a sin unto death; I do not say that you shall pray for it, even as I hear the Masters words, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But these persons knew what they did, did it deliberately, did it over again and again, and againperhaps went to the Lords Table and deliberately went to their uncleanness, stood up in public, it may be, and then deliberately went to their filthiness. Or they listened to the sermon on Sunday and they said, Ill do betterand then deliberately went on Monday to their drunken companions again! Oh, Man, you may have stood in the street, perhaps, and said to yourself, Now, which shall it be? I feel as if I were called to serve God, but yet how can I give up such-and-such a darling lust? There is a point in mens lives wherein if they deliberately choose the wrong, knowing it is wrong, with the Light of God shining on their eyeballsyet they deliberately give up Christ, Heaven, pardon and they choose Hell and their own delusionsI fear that with many from that hour the wax is cooled upon their death warrant and it will never be reversed, for this text, though it gently flows from the Saviors lips and drops like dew, has about it the lightning flash and thunderbolt that startles, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.   
But there are some who know what they do and take the hammer and nail Christ up to the Cross! They take a spear and pierce His side and do it knowing what they are doing! And all the while they are glibly talking of religion, taking the Bible to make jokes out of it, taking the very ministers they once professed to love and scoffing them, taking the Doctrines of the Gospel and making these a cloak for their sinsthese menwhat will I say of them? God have mercy upon them, but I fear, I fear, that He never will, for they will never seek it, and He will never grant it! Could they seek it, He would give it. While a man can seek, he shall find. While a heart can melt, God will pity. There is never a contrite soul but what God looks with love upon it. But here is the mischief, for these men, who know what they do, repent not, but are seared as with a hot ironthey become wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever!   
But I must close here. This shall be a closing word. At the same time, you see the text woos. It warns, but it woos. How it woos the ignorant, especially! Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Oh, some of you have dropped in here tonight who, perhaps, dont often listen to the Gospel. You have been living a life of sin. You knew it was sin, You knew it was sin, but you did not know that you were nailing Christ to the Cross. You sought your own pleasure, you sought your own gratifications. You have been very guilty. You have lived a careless, Godless, Christless life, but still you did not mean to sin against God so as to crucify Christ. You see you have done sonow you feel you are guilty of it but before, you had not that Light of God that you now have. Then Jesus says, Come to Me, come to Me! My prayer goes up to Heaven for you, you ignorant one. Sinful, but without light, Jesus intercedes! Oh, join your prayer with the prayer of Jesus, and say, Father, forgive Your ignorant child, Your sinful, wayward child. I do not plead, I knew not what I did, but Christ pleads it for me! I plead that Jesus died. Oh, for His sake, have pity! Hear His blood as it drops from His hands and feet; hear it and plead for me, Father, forgive them.   
Oh if you will seek the Lord, you shall have Him! If you will but turn your eyes to Him upon the Cross, you shall live! Whoever among you in this house will but trust Him, shall find Him able and willing to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. Oh, come and welcome, come and welcome! And may God grant that you may come tonight *But if your ears refuse   
The language of His Grace,   
And hearts grow gross 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 bless you. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MATTHEW 27:32-49.**

Verse 32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear His Cross. Perhaps they were afraid that Christ would die from exhaustion, so they compelled Simon to bear His Cross. Any one of Christs followers might have wished to have been this man of Cyrene, but we need not envy him, for there is a cross for each of us to carry. Oh, that we were as willing to bear Christs Cross as Christ was to bear our sins on His Cross! If anything happens to us by way of persecution or ridicule for our Lords sake, and the Gospels, let us cheerfully endure it! As knights are made by a stroke from the sovereigns sword, so shall we become princes in Christs realm as He lays His Cross on our shoulders.

33, 34. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink. Golgotha was the common place of execution for malefactors, the Tyburn or Old Bailey of Jerusalem, outside the gate of the city. There was a special symbolical reason for Christs suffering outside the gate, and His followers are bid to reason for Christs suffering outside the gate, and His followers are bid to 13). A stupefying draught was given to the condemned, to take away something of the agony of crucifixionbut our Lord came to sufferand He would not take anything that would at all impair His faculties. He did not forbid His fellow sufferers drinking the vinegar mingled with gall (wine mingled with myrrh, Mark 15:23), but He would not drink thereof. Jesus did not refuse this draught because of its bitterness, for He was prepared to drink even to the last dreadful dregs the bitter cup of wrath which was His peoples due.

35. And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. There is a world of meaning in that short sentence, and they crucified Him, driving their bolts of iron through His blessed hands and feet, fastening Him to the Cross and lifting Him up to hang there upon a gallows reserved for felons. We can scarcely realize all that the Crucifixion meant to our dear Lord, but we can join in Fabers prayer

*Lord Jesus! May we love and weep,   
Since You, for us, are crucified.*   
Then was fulfilled all that our Lord had foretold in Chapter 20:17-19, except His Resurrection, the time for which had not arrived.   
The criminals clothes were the executioners profits. The Roman soldiers who crucified Christ had no thought of fulfilling the Scriptures

when they parted His garments, casting lots, yet their action was exactly that which had been foretold in Psalm 22:18! The seamless robe would have been spoiled if it had been torn, so the soldiers raffled for the vesture, while they shared the other garments of our Lord. The dice would be almost stained with the blood of Christ, yet the gamblers played on beneath the shadow of His Cross. Gambling is the most hardening of all vices. Beware of it in any form! No games of chance should be played by Christians, for the blood of Christ seems to have bespattered them all.

36. And sitting down they watched Him there. Some watched Him from curiosity, some to make sure that He really did die, some even delighted their cruel eyes with His sufferingsand there were some, hard by the Cross, who wept and bewailed, a sword passing through their own hearts while the Son of Man was agonizing even unto death!

37. And set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. What a marvelous Providence it was that moved Pilates pen! The representative of the Roman Emperor was little likely to concede kingship to any man, yet he deliberately wrote, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews, and nothing would induce him to alter what he had written! Even on His Cross, Christ was proclaimed King, in the sacerdotal Hebrew, the classical Greek, and the common Latin, so that everybody in the crowd could read the inscription! When will the Jews admit Jesus as their King? They will do so one day, looking on Him whom they pierced. Perhaps they will think more of Christ when Christians think more of themwhen our hardness of heart towards them has gone, possibly their hardness of heart towards Christ may also disappear.

38. Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. As if to show that they regarded Christ as the worst of the three criminals, they put Him between the two thieves, giving Him the place of dishonor. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled, He was numbered with the transgressors. The two malefactors deserved to die, as one of them admitted (Luke 23:40, 41), but a greater load of guilt vested upon Christ, for, He bore the sin of many, and, therefore, He was rightly distinguished as the King of Sufferers, who could truly ask Was ever grief like Mine?

Verses 39, 40. And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, You who destroys the temple, and builds it in three days, save Yourself. If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross. Nothing torments a man when in pain more than mockery. When Jesus Christ most needed words of pity and looks of kindness, they who passed by, reviled Him, wagging their heads. Perhaps the most painful part of ridicule is to have ones most solemn sayings turned to scorn, as were our Lords words about the temple of His bodyYou who destroys the temple, and builds it in three days, save Yourself. He might have saved HimselfHe might have come down from the Crossbut if He had done so, we could never have become the sons of God! It was because He was the Son of God that He did not come down from the Cross, but hung there until He had completed the Sacrifice for His peoples sin. Christs Cross is the Jacobs ladder by which we mount up to Heaven! This is the cry of the Socinian today, Come down from the Cross. Give up the atoning Sacrifice and we will be Christians! Many are willing to believe in Christ, but not in Christ Crucified. They admit that He was a good Man and a great Teacher, but by rejecting His vicarious Atonement, they practically un-Christ the Christ, as these mockers at Golgotha did.

41-43. Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross and we will believe Him. He trusted in God: let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The chief priests, with the scribes and elders, forgetting their high station and rank, joined the ribald crew in mocking Jesus in His death pangs! Every word was emphaticevery syllable cut and pierced our Lord to the heart. They mocked Him as a SaviorHe saved others; Himself He cannot save. They mocked Him as a KingIf He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him. They mocked Him as a BelieverHe trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him. They mocked Him as the Son of GodFor He said, I am the Son of God. Those who say that Christ was a good Man, virtually admit His Deity, for He claimed to be the Son of God. If He was not what He professed to be, He was an impostor. Notice the testimony that Christs bitterest enemies bore even as they reviled HimHe saved others. He is the King of Israel (R. V.) He trusted in God.

44. The thieves, also, who were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. The sharers of His misery, the wretches who were crucified with Him, joined in reviling Jesus. Nothing was lacking to fill up His cup of suffering and shame. The conversion of the penitent thief was all the more remarkable because he had but a little while before been among the mockers of his Savior! What a trophy of Divine Grace he became!

45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. Some have thought that this darkness covered the whole world, and so caused even a heathen to exclaim, Either the world is about to expire, or the God who made the world is in anguish. This darkness was supernaturalit was not an eclipse. The sun could no longer look upon its Maker surrounded by these who mocked Him. He covered his face and traveled on in tenfold night, in very shame that the great Sun of Righteousness should, Himself, be in such terrible darkness.

46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani? That is to say, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? In order that the Sacrifice of Christ might be complete, it pleased the Father to forsake His well-beloved Son. Sin was laid on Christ, so God must turn away His face from the Sin-Bearer. To be deserted of His God was the climax of Christs grief, the quintessence of His sorrow! See here the distinction between the martyrs and their Lordin their dying agonies they have been Divinely sustainedbut Jesus, suffering as the Substitute for sinners, was forsaken of God! The saints who have known what it is to have their Fathers face hidden from them, even for a brief space, can scarcely imagine the suffering that wrung from our Savior the agonizing cry, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

47. Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This Man calls for Elijah. They knew better, yet they jested at the Saviors prayer. Wickedly, willfully and scornfully, they turned His death shriek into ridicule!

48, 49. And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. The rest said, Let Him be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him. A person in such agony as Jesus was suffering might have mentioned many pangs that He was enduring, but it was necessary for Him to say, I thirst, in order that another Scripture might be fulfilled. One of them, more compassionate than his companions, ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, from the vessel probably brought by the soldiers for their own use, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. It always seems to me very remarkable that the sponge, which is the very lowest form of animal life, should have been brought into contact with Christ, who is at the top of all life. In His death the whole circle of Creation was completed. As the sponge brought refreshment to the lips of our dying Lord, so may the least of Gods living ones help to refresh Him, now that He has ascended from the Cross to the Throne!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #897 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE FIRST CRY FROM THE CROSS   
NO. 897

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 24, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34.**

OUR Lord was at that moment enduring the first pains of crucifixion. The executioners had just then driven the nails through His hands and feet. He must have been, moreover, greatly depressed and brought into a condition of extreme weakness by the agony of the night in Gethsemane and by the scourging and cruel mocking which He had endured all through the morning from Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod and the Praetorian guards. Yet neither the weakness of the past, nor the pain of the present could prevent Him from continuing in prayer. The lamb of God was silent to men, but He was not silent to God. Dumb as a sheep before her shearers, He had not a word to say in His own defense to man, but He continues in His heart crying unto His Father and no pain and no weakness can silence His holy supplications.

Beloved, what an example our Lord here presents to us! Let us continue in prayer so long as our heart beats! Let no excess of suffering drive us away from the Throne of Grace, but rather let it drive us closer to it

*Long as they live should Christians pray, For only while they pray they live.*   
To cease from prayer is to renounce the consolations which our case requires. Under all distractions of spirit and overwhelming of heart, great

God, help us still to pray and never from the Mercy Seat may our footsteps be driven by despair. Our blessed Redeemer persevered in prayer even when the cruel iron tore His tender nerves and blow after blow of the hammer jarred His whole frame with anguishand this perseverance may be accounted for by the fact that He was so in the habit of prayer that He could not cease from itHe had acquired a mighty velocity of intercession which forbade Him to pause. Those long nights upon the cold mountainsidethose many days which had been spent in solitude, those perpetual ejaculations which He would dart up to Heavenall these had formed in Him a habit so powerful, that the severest torments could not slow its force.

Yet it was more than habit. Our Lord was baptized in the spirit of prayer. He lived in it, it lived in Him. It had come to be an element of His Nature. He was like that precious spice, which, being bruised, does not cease to give forth its perfume, but rather yields it all the more abundantly. Because of the blows to the pestle, its fragrance is no outward and superficial quality, but an inward virtue essential to its naturewhich the pounding does but fetch from itcausing it to reveal its secret soul of sweetness. So Jesus prays, even as a bundle of myrrh gives forth its smell, or as birds sing because they cannot do otherwise. Prayer wrapped His very soul as with a garment and His heart went forth in much array. I repeat it, let this be our examplenever, under any circumstances, however severe the trial, or depressing the difficultylet us cease from prayer.

Observe, further, that our Lord, in the prayer before us, remains in the vigor of faith as to His Sonship. The extreme trial to which He now submitted Himself could not prevent His holding fast His Sonship. His prayer begins, Father. It was not without meaning that He taught us when we pray to say, Our Father, for our prevalence in prayer will much depend upon our confidence in our relationship to God. Under great losses and crosses one is apt to think that God is not dealing with us as a father with a child, but rather as a severe judge with a condemned criminal. But the cry of Christ, when He is brought to an extremity which we shall never reach, betrays no faltering in the spirit of Sonship. And in Gethsemane, when the bloody sweat fell fast upon the ground, His most bitter cry commenced with, My Father, asking that if it were possible the cup of gall might pass from Him. He pleaded with the Lord as His Father, even as He over and over again had called Him on that dark and doleful night.

Here, again, in this, the first of His seven expiring cries, it is Father. O that the Spirit that makes us cry, Abba, Father, may never cease His operations! May we never be brought into spiritual bondage by the suggestion, If you are the Son of God. Or if the Tempter should so assail us, may we triumph as Jesus did in the hungry wilderness. May the Spirit which cries, Abba, Father, repel each unbelieving fear. When we are chastened, as we must be (for what sort is there whom his father chastens not?) may we be in loving subjection to the Father of our spirits and live. But never may we become captives to the spirit of bondage, so as to doubt the love of our gracious Father, or our share in His adoption.

More remarkable, however, is the fact that our Lords prayer to His Father was not for Himself. He continued on the Cross to pray for Himself, it is true, and His lamentable cry, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? shows the personality of His prayer. But the first of the seven great cries on the Cross has scarcely even an indirect reference to Himself. It is, Father, forgive them. The petition is altogether for others and though there is an allusion to the cruelties which they were exercising upon Him, yet it is remote.

And, you will observe He does not say, I forgive themthat is taken for grantedHe seems to lose sight of the fact that they were doing any wrong to Him. It is the wrong which they were doing to the Father that is on His mind. The insult which they are paying to the Father, in the Person of the SonHe thinks not of Himself at all. The cry, Father, forgive them, is altogether unselfish. He, Himself, is in the prayer, as though He were not. So complete is His self-annihilation that He loses sight of Himself and His woes. My Brethren, if there had ever been a time in the life of the Son of Man when He might have rigidly confined His prayer to Himself, without anyone complaining, surely it was when He was beginning His death throes.

We would not marvel, if any man here were fastened to the stake, or fixed to a cross, if his first and even his last and all his prayers were for support under so arduous a trial. But see, the Lord Jesus began His prayer by pleading for others! Cant you see what a great heart is revealed here? What a soul of compassion was in the Crucified! How Godlike, how Divine! Was there ever such a one before Him, who, even in the very pangs of death, offers as His first prayer an intercession for others? Let this unselfish spirit be in you, also, my Brothers and Sisters. Look not every man upon his own things, but every man, also, on the things of others. Love your neighbors as yourselves and as Christ has set before you this paragon of unselfishness, seek to follow Him, treading in His steps.

There is, however, a crowning jewel in this diadem of glorious love. The Sun of Righteousness sets upon Calvary in a wondrous splendor, but among the bright colors which glorify His departure, there is this onethe prayer was not alone for others, but it was for His cruelest enemies. His enemies, did I say? There is more than that to be considered. It was not a prayer for enemies who had done Him an ill deed years before, but for those who were then and there murdering Him! Not in cold blood did the Savior pray, after He had forgotten the injury and could the more easily forgive it, but while the first red drops of blood were spurting on the hands which drove the nails! While yet the hammer was stained with crimson gore, His blessed mouth poured out the fresh warm prayer, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

I say, not that that prayer was confined to His immediate executioners. I believe that it was a far-reaching prayer, which included Scribes and Pharisees, Pilate and Herod, Jews and Gentilesyes, the whole human race, in a certain sense, since we were all concerned in that murderbut certainly the immediate persons upon whom that prayer was poured like precious nard were those who then and there were committing the brutal act of fastening Him to the accursed tree. How sublime is this prayer if viewed in such a light! It stands alone upon a mount of solitary glory! No other had been prayed like it before. It is true, Abraham and Moses and the Prophets had prayed for the wickedbut not for wicked men who had pierced their hands and feet!

It is true that Christians have since that day offered the same prayer, even as Stephen cried, Lay not this sin to their charge, and many a martyr has made his last words at the stake words of pitying intercession for his persecutors. But you know where they learned this. Let me ask you, where did He learn it? Was not Jesus the Divine original? He learned it nowhereit leaped up from His own Godlike Nature. A compassion peculiar to Himself dictated this originality of prayer. The inward royalty of His love suggested to Him so memorable an intercessionwhich may serve us for a patternbut of which no pattern had existed before.

I feel as though I could better kneel before my Lords Cross at this moment than stand in this pulpit to talk to you. I want to adore Him. I worship Him in heart for that prayer! If I knew nothing else of Him but this one prayer, I must adore Himfor that one matchless plea for mercy convinces me most overwhelmingly of the Deity of Him who offered it and fills my heart with reverent affection. Thus have I introduced to you our Lords first vocal prayer upon the Cross. I shall now, if we are helped by Gods Holy Spirit, make some use of it.

First, we shall view it as illustrative of our Saviors intercession. Secondly, we shall regard the text as instructive of the Churchs work. Thirdly, we shall consider it as suggestive to the unconverted.

I. First, my dear Brethren, let us look at this very wonderful text as ILLUSTRATIVE OF OUR LORDS INTERCESSION. He prayed for His enemies, thenHe is praying for His enemies now. The past on the Cross was an earnest of the present on the Throne. He is in a higher place and in a nobler condition, but His occupation is the sameHe continues, still, before the Eternal Throne, to present pleas on the behalf of guilty men, crying, Father, O forgive them. All His intercession is, in a measure, like the intercession on Calvary and Calvarys cries may help us to guess the character of the whole of His intercession above.

The first point in which we may see the character of His intercession is thisit is most gracious. Those for whom our Lord prayed, according to the text, did not deserve His prayer. They had done nothing which could call forth from Him a benediction as a reward for their endeavors in His service. On the contrary, they were most undeserving persons who had conspired to put Him to death. They had crucified Him! Crucified Him wantonly and malignantly. They were even, then, taking away His innocent life. His clients were persons, who, so far from being meritorious, were utterly undeserving of a single good wish from the Saviors heart. They certainly never asked Him to pray for themit was the last thought in their minds to say, Intercede for us, You dying King! Offer petitions on our behalf, You Son of God!

I will venture to believe the prayer itself, when they heard it, was either disregarded and passed over with contemptuous indifference, or perhaps it was caught at as a theme for jest. I admit that it seems to be too severe upon humanity to suppose it possible that such a prayer could have been the theme for laughter, and yet there were other things enacted around the Cross which were quite as brutal, and I can imagine that this, also, might have happened. Yet our Savior not only prayed for persons who did not deserve the prayer, but, on the contrary, merited a cursepersons who did not ask for the prayer and even scoffed at it when they heard it.

Even so in Heaven there stands the great High Priest, who pleads for guilty menfor guilty men, my Hearers! There are none on earth that deserve His intercession. He pleads for none on the supposition that they do deserve it. He stands there to plead as the Just One on the behalf of the unjust. Not if any man is righteous, but, if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father. Remember, too, that our great Intercessor pleads for such as never asked Him to plead for them. His elect, while yet dead in trespasses and sins, are the objects of His compassionate intercessions and while they even scoff at His Gospel, His heart of love is entreating the favor of Heaven on their behalf.

See, then, Beloved, if such is the Truth of God, how sure you are to find favor with God who earnestly asks the Lord Jesus Christ to plead for you. Some of you, with many tears and much earnestness, have been beseeching the Savior to be your Advocate. Will He refuse you? Stands it to reason that He can? He pleads for those that reject His pleadings, much more for you who prize them beyond gold! Remember, my dear Hearer, if there is nothing good in you and if there is everything conceivable that is malignant and bad, yet none of these things can be any barrier to prevent Christs exercising the office of Intercessor for you! Even for you He will plead. Come, put your case into His hands! For you He will find pleas which you cannot discover for yourselves and He will put the case to God for you as for His murderers, Father, forgive them.

A second quality of His intercession is this its careful spirit. You notice in the prayer, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Our Savior did, as it were, look His enemies through and through to find something in them that He could urge in their favor. But He could see nothing until His wisely affectionate eyes lit upon their ignorancethey know not what they do. How carefully He surveyed the circumstances, and the characters of those for whom He prayed! Just so it is with Him in Heaven. Christ is no careless Advocate for His people. He knows your precise condition at this moment and the exact state of your heart with regard to the temptation through which you are passing. More than that, He foresees the temptation which is awaiting you and in His intercession He takes note of the future event which His prescient eyes behold.

Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith fail not. Oh, the condescending tenderness of our great High Priest! He knows us better than we know ourselves! He understands every secret grief and groan. You need not trouble yourself about the wording of your prayerHe will put the wording right. And even the understanding as to the exact petition, if you should fail in it, He cannotfor as He knows what is the mind of Godso He knows what is your mind, also. He can spy out some reason for mercy in you which you cannot detect in yourselves and when it is so dark and cloudy with your soul that you cannot discern a foothold for a plea that you may urge with Heaven, the Lord Jesus has the pleas ready-framed and petitions ready drawn upand He can present them acceptable before the Mercy Seat. His intercession, then, you will observe, is very gracious and in the next place it is very thoughtful.

We must next note its earnestness. No one doubts who reads these words, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, that they were Heaven-piercing in their fervor. Brethren, you are certain, even without a thought, that Christ was terribly in earnest in that prayer. But there is an argument to prove that. Earnest people are usually witty and quick of understanding to discover anything which may serve their turn. If you are pleading for life and an argument for your being spared is asked of you, I will guarantee you that you will think of one when no one else might. Now, Jesus was so in earnest for the salvation of His enemies, that He struck upon an argument for mercy which a less anxious spirit would not have thought ofThey know not what they do.

Why, Sirs, that was in strictest justice but a scant reason for mercy! And indeed, ignorance, if it is willful, does not extenuate sin and yet the ignorance of many who surrounded the Cross was a willful ignorance. They should have known that He was the Lord of Glory. Was not Moses plain enough? Had not Elijah been very bold in his speech? Were not the signs and tokens such that one might as well doubt which is the sun in the firmament as the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah? Yet, for all that, the Savior, with marvelous earnestness and consequent dexterity, turns what might not have been a plea, into a plea, and puts it thusFather, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Oh, how mighty are His pleas in Heaven, then, in their earnestness!

Do not suppose that He is less quick of understanding there, or less intense in the vehemence of His entreaties. No, my Brethren, the heart of Christ still labors with the eternal God. He is no slumbering Intercessor, but, for Zions sake, He does not hold His peaceand for Jerusalems sake He does not ceasenor will He, till her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns. It is interesting to note, in the fourth place, that the prayer here offered helps us to judge of His intercession in Heaven as to its continuance, perseverance and perpetuity. As I remarked before, if our Savior might have paused from intercessory prayer, it was surely when they fastened Him to the treewhen they were guilty of direct acts of deadly violence to His Divine Person, He might then have ceased to present petitions on their behalf. But sin cannot tie the tongue of our interceding Friend.

Oh, what comfort is here! You have sinned, Believer, you have grieved His Spirit, but you have not stopped that potent tongue which pleads for you! You have been unfruitful, perhaps, my Brother, and like the barren tree you deserve to be cut downbut your lack of fruitfulness has not withdrawn the Intercessor from His place. He interposes at this moment, crying, Spare it yet another year. Sinner, you have provoked God by long rejecting His mercy and going from bad to worse, but neither blasphemy nor unrighteousness, nor infidelity shall stop the Christ of God from urging the suit of the very chief of sinners! He lives and while He lives He pleadsand while there is a sinner upon earth to be saved, there shall be an Intercessor in Heaven to plead for him. These are but fragments of thought, but they will help you, I hope, to realize the intercession of your great High Priest.

Think yet again, this prayer of our Lord on earth is like His prayer in Heaven because of its wisdom. He seeks the best thing and that which His clients most need, Father, forgive them. That was the great point in handthey needed most of all, then and there, forgiveness from God. He does not say, Father, enlighten them, for they know not what they do, for mere enlightenment would but have created torture of conscience and hastened on their Hell. No, He cries, Father, forgive. And while He used His voice, the precious drops of blood which were then distilling from the nail wounds were pleading, too, and God heard and doubtless did forgive.

The first mercy which is necessary to guilty sinners is forgiven sin. Christ wisely prays for the blessing most needed. It is so in HeavenHe pleads wisely and prudently. Let Him alone, He knows what to ask for at the Divine hand! Go to the Mercy Seat and pour out your desires as best you can, but when you have done, always put it thus, O my Lord Jesus, answer no desire of mine if it is not according to Your judgment. And if in anything that I have asked I have failed to seek for what I need, amend my pleading, for You are infinitely wiser than I. Oh, it is sweet to have a Friend at court to perfect our petitions for us before they come unto the great King!

I believe that there is never presented to God anything but a perfect prayer now. I mean that before the great Father of us all, no prayer of His people ever comes up imperfect. There is nothing left out and there is nothing to be erased, and this, not because their prayers were originally perfect in themselves, but because the Mediator makes them perfect through His infinite wisdomand they come up before the Mercy Seat molded according to the mind of God Himself and He is sure to grant such prayers.

Once more, this memorable prayer of our crucified Lord was like His universal intercession in the matter of its prevalence. Those for whom He prayed were, many of them, forgiven. Do you remember that He said to His disciples when He bade them preach, beginning at Jerusalem. And on that day when Peter stood up with the Eleven and charged the people that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain the Savior, 3,000 of these persons who were thus justly accused of His crucifixion became Believers in Him and were baptized in His name. That was an answer to Jesus prayer! The priests were at the bottom of our Lords murderthey were the most guiltyand it is said, a great company, also, of the priests believed. Here was another answer to the prayer!

Since all men had their share representatively, Gentiles as well as Jews, in the death of Jesus, the Gospel was soon preached to the Jews and within a short time it was preached to the Gentiles, also. Was not this prayer, Father, forgive them, like a stone cast into a lake, forming, at first, a narrow circle and then a wider ring and soon a larger sphere, until the whole lake is covered with circling waves? Such a prayer as this, cast into the whole world, first created a little ring of Jewish converts and of priests and then a wider circle of such as were beneath the Roman sway! And today its circumference is as wide as the globe itself, so that tens of thousands are saved through the prevalence of this one intercession, Father, forgive them.

It is certainly so with Him in HeavenHe never pleads in vain. With bleeding hands, He yet won the day. With feet fastened to the wood, He was yet victorious. Forsaken of God and despised of the people, He was yet triumphant in His pleas. How much more so now the tiara is about His brow? How much more so now His hand grasps the universal scepter and His feet are shod with silver sandals and He is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords? If tears and cries out of weakness were Omnipotent, even more mighty, if possible, must be that sacred authority which, as the risen Priest, He claims when He stands before the Fathers Throne to mention the Covenant which the Father made with Him. O you trembling Believers, trust Him with your concerns!

Come here, you guilty, and ask him to plead for you! O you that cannot pray, come, ask Him to intercede for you. Broken hearts and weary heads and disconsolate bosoms, come to Him who into the golden censer will put His merits and then place your prayers with them so that they shall come up as the smoke of perfume, even as a fragrant cloud into the nostrils of the Lord God of Hosts, who will smell a sweet savor and accept you and your prayers in the Beloved! We have now opened up more than enough room for your meditations at home this afternoon and, therefore, we leave this first point. We have had an illustration in the prayer of Christ on the Cross of what His prayers always are in Heaven.

II. Secondly, the text is INSTRUCTIVE OF THE CHURCHS WORK. As Christ was, so His Church is to be in this world. Christ came into this world not to be ministered unto, but to ministernot to be honored, but to save others. His Church, when she understands her work, will perceive that she is not here to gather to herself wealth or honor, or to seek any temporal aggrandizement and position. She is here unselfishly to live, and if need be, unselfishly to die for the deliverance of the lost sheep, the salvation of lost men. Brethren, Christs prayer on the Cross, I told you, was altogether an unselfish one. He does not remember Himself in it.

Such ought to be the Churchs life-prayer, the Churchs active interposition on the behalf of sinners. She ought to live never for her ministers or for herself, but always for the lost sons of men. Do you imagine that Churches are formed to maintain ministers? Do you conceive that the Church exists in this land merely that so much salary may be given to bishops and deans, and prebends and curates and I know not what? My Brethren, it were well if the whole thing were abolished if that were its only aim! The aim of the Church is not to provide backdoor relief for the younger sons of the nobility when they have not brains enough to win their livelihood any other way! Churches are not made so that men of ready speech may stand up on Sundays and talk and so win daily bread from their admirers!

No, there is another end and aim from this. These places of worship are not built that you may sit here comfortably and hear something that shall make you pass away your Sundays with pleasure. A Church in London which does not exist to do good in the slums and dens and kennels of the city is a Church that has no reason to justify its existence any longer! A Church that does not exist to reclaim heathenism, to fight with evil, to destroy error, to put down falsehooda Church that does not exist to take the side of the poor, to denounce injustice and to hold up righteousness is a Church that has no right to be! Not for yourself, O Church, do you exist, any more than Christ existed for Himself! His Glory was that He laid aside His Glory and the Glory of the Church is when she lays aside her respectability and her dignity and counts it to be her Glory to gather together the outcasts and her highest honor to seek amid the foulest mire the priceless jewels for which Jesus shed His blood!

To rescue souls from Hell and lead them to God, to hope, to Heaven this is her heavenly occupation! O that the Church would always feel this! Let her have her bishops and her preachers and let them be supported and let everything be done for Christs sake decently and in order, but let the end be looked to, namely, the conversion of the wandering, the teaching of the ignorant, the help of the poor, the maintenance of the right, the putting down of the wrong and the upholding at all hazards of the crown and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Now the prayer of Christ had a great spirituality of aim. You notice that nothing is sought for these people but that which concerns their souls, Father forgive them. And I believe the Church will do well when she remembers that she wrestles not with flesh and blood, nor with principalities and powers, but with spiritual wickedness and that what she has to dispense is not the Law and Order by which magistrates may be upheld, or tyrannies pulled down, but the spiritual government by which hearts are conquered to Christ and judgments are brought into subjection to His Truth. I believe that the more the Church of God strains after, before God, the forgiveness of sinners and the more she seeks in her life prayer to teach sinners what sin is and what the blood of Christ is and what the Hell that must follow if sin is not washed out and what the Heaven is which will be ensured to all those who are cleansed from sinthe more she keeps to thisthe better.

Press forward as one man, my Brethren, to secure the root of the matter in the forgiveness of sinners. As to all the evils that afflict humanity, by all means take your share in battling with them! Let temperance be maintained, let education be supported! Let reforms, political and ecclesiastical, be pushed forward as far as you have the time and effort to spare! But the first business of every Christian man and woman is with the hearts and consciences of men as they stand before the Everlasting God. O let nothing turn you aside from your Divine errand of mercy to undying souls! This is your one business. Tell sinners that sin will damn them that Christ, alone, can take away sinsand make this the one passion of your souls, Father, forgive them, forgive them! Let them know how to be forgiven. Let them be actually forgiven and let me never rest except as I am the means of bringing sinners to be forgiven, even the guiltiest of them.

Our Saviors prayer teaches the Church that while her spirit should be unselfish and her aim should be spiritual, the range of her mission is to be unlimited. Christ prayed for the wicked. What if I say the most wicked of the wicked, that ribald crew that had surrounded His Cross? He prayed for the ignorant. Does He not say, They know not what they do? He prayed for His persecutorsthe very persons who were most at enmity with Him lay nearest to His heart! Church of God, your mission is not to the respectable few who will gather about your ministers to listen respectfully to their words! Your mission is not to the elite and the eclectic, the intelligent who will criticize your words and pass judgment upon every syllable of your teaching! Your mission is not to those who treat you kindly, generously, affectionately!

Not to these, I mean, alone, though certainly to these as among the rest. But your great errand is to the harlot, to the thief, to the swearer and the drunkard, to the most depraved and debauched! If no one else cares for these, the Church always must, and if there are any who are first in her prayers it should be these who, alas, are generally last in our thoughts. The ignorant we ought diligently to consider. It is not enough for the preacher that he preaches so that those instructed from their youth up can understand him. He must think of those to whom the most common phrases of theological truth are as meaningless as the jargon of an unknown tongue. He must preach so as to reach the meanest comprehension, and if the ignorant many come not to hear him, he must use such means as best he may to induce them, no, compel them to hear the Good News.

The Gospel is meant, also, for those who persecute religionit aims its arrows of love against the hearts of its foes. It there are any whom we should first seek to bring to Jesus, it should be just these who are the farthest off and most opposed to the Gospel of Christ. Father, forgive them. If You pardon none besides, yet be pleased to forgive them. So, too, the Church should be earnest as Christ was. And if she is so, she will be quick to notice any ground of hope in those she deals with. She will be quick to observe any plea that she may use with God for their salvation. She must be hopeful, too, and surely no Church ever had a more hopeful sphere than the Church of this present age! If ignorance is a plea with God, look on the heathens at this daymillions of them never heard Messiahs name! Forgive them, great God, indeed they know not what they do!

If ignorance is some ground for hope, there is hope enough in this great city of London, for have we not around us hundreds of thousands to whom the simplest Truths of the Gospel would be the greatest novelties? Brethren, it is sad to think that this country should still lie under such a pall of ignorance, but the sting of so dread a fact is blunted with hope when we read the Saviors prayer arightit helps us to hope while we cry, Forgive them, for they know not what they do. It is the Churchs business to seek after the most fallen and the most ignorant and to seek them perseveringly. She should never stop her hand from doing good. If the Lord is coming tomorrow, it is no reason why you Christian people should subside into mere talkers and readers, meeting together for mutual comfort and forgetting the myriads of perishing souls.

If it is true that this world is going to pieces in a fortnight and that Louis Napoleon is the Apocalyptic beastor if it is not trueI care not a fig! It makes no difference to my duty and does not change my service. Let my Lord come when He will, while I labor for Him I am ready for His appearing! The business of the Church is still to watch for the salvation of souls. If she stood gazing, as modern prophets would have her doif she gave up her mission to indulge in speculative interpretationsshe might well be afraid of her Lords coming. But if she goes about her work and with incessant toil searches out her Lords precious jewels, she shall not be ashamed when her Bridegroom comes!

My time has been much too short for so vast a subject as I have undertaken, but I wish I could speak words that were as loud as thunder, with a sense and earnestness as mighty as the lightning! I would gladly excite every Christian here and kindle in him a right idea of what his work is as a part of Christs Church. My Brethren, you must not live to yourselves! The accumulation of money, the bringing up of your children, the building of houses, the earning of your daily breadall this you may dobut there must be a greater object than this if you are to be Christ-like, as you should be, since you are bought with Jesus blood.

Begin to live for others! Make it apparent unto all men that you are not yourselves the end-all and be-all of your own existence, but that you are spending and being spentthat through the good you do to men God may be glorified and Christ may see in you His own image and be satisfied.

III. Time fails me, but the last point was to be a word SUGGESTIVE TO THE UNCOVETED. Listen attentively to these sentences. I will make them as terse and condensed as possible. Some of you here are not saved. Now, some of you have been very ignorant and when you sinned you did not know what you did. You knew you were sinners, you knew that, but you did not know the far-reaching guilt of sin. You have not been attending the House of Prayer long. You have not read your Bible. You have not Christian parents.

Now you are beginning to be anxious about your souls. Remember your ignorance does not excuse you, or else Christ would not say, Forgive them. They must be forgiven, even those that know not what they do, and therefore they are individually guilty. But still that ignorance of yours gives you just a little gleam of hope. The times of your ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men everywhere to repent. Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance! The God whom you have ignorantly forgotten is willing to pardon and ready to forgive. The Gospel is just thistrust Jesus Christ who died for the guilty and you shall be saved! O may God help you to do so this very morning and you will become new men and new womena change will take place in you equal to a new birthyou will be new creatures in Christ Jesus!

But ah, my Friends, there are some here for whom even Christ Himself could not pray this prayer, in the widest sense at any rate, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, for you have known what you did, and every sermon you hear and especially every impression that is made upon your understanding and conscience by the Gospel adds to your responsibility and takes away from you the excuse of not knowing what you do! Ah, Sirs, you know that there is the world and Christ and that you cannot have both! You know that there is sin and God and that you cannot serve both! You know that there are the pleasures of evil and the pleasures of Heaven and that you cannot have both! Oh, in the light which God has given you, may His Spirit also come and help you to choose that which true wisdom would make you choose.

Decide today for God, for Christ, for Heaven! The Lord decide You for His names sake. Amen.   
*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 23:1-34.* Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #3363 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WITNESSING AT THE CROSS   
NO. 3363

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 17, 1913.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***And one of the malefactors who was hanged, railed on Him, saying, If you are Christ, save Yourself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Do not you fear God, seeing you are in the***

***same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Luke 23:39-43.***

THE dying thief was certainly a very great wonder of Divine Grace. He has generally been looked upon from one point of view onlyas a sinner called at the eleventh hour and, therefore, an instance of special mercy because he was so near to death. Enough has been made of that circumstance by others! To my mind, it is by no means the most important point in the narrative. Had the thief been predestined to come down from the Cross and live for half a century longer, his conversion would have been neither more nor less than it was. The work of Grace which enabled him to die in peace would, if it had been the Lords will, have enabled him to live in holiness. We may well admire Divine Grace when it so speedily makes a man fit for the bliss of Heaven! But it is equally to be adored when it makes him ready for the battle of earth. To bear a saved sinner away from all further conflict is great Grace. But the power and love of God are, if anything, even more conspicuous when, like a sheep surrounded by wolves, or a spark in the midst of the sea, a Believer is enabled to live on in the teeth of an ungodly world and maintain his integrity to the end! Dear Friend, whether you die as soon as you are bornagain, or remain on earth for many years is comparatively a small matterand will not materially alter your indebtedness to Divine Grace! In the one case the great Husbandman will show how He can bring His flowers speedily to perfection. And in the other He will prove how He can preserve them in blooming beauty despite the frosts and snows of earths cruel winter! In either case your experience will reveal the same love and power.

There are other things, it seems to me, to be seen in the conversion of the thief besides the one single matter of his being brought to know the Lord when near to deaths door.

Observe the singular fact that our Lord Jesus Christ should die in the company of two malefactors. It was probably planned in order to bring Him shame and it was regarded by those who cried, Crucify Him! Crucify Him! as an additional ignominy. Their malice decreed that He should die as a criminal and with criminalsand in the center, between twoto show that they thought Him the worst of the three. But God, in His own way, baffled the malice of the foe and turned it to the triumph and Glory of His dear Son, for had there been no dying thief hanging at His side, then one of the most illustrious trophies of His love would not have been gained! And we would not have been able to sing to His praise

*The dying thief rejoiced to see   
That fountain in his day   
And there have I, though vile as he,   
Washed all my sins away!*

His enemies gave our Lord Jesus an opportunity for still continuing the seeking, as well as the saving of the lost! They found Him an occasion for manifesting His conquering Grace when they supposed they were heaping scorn upon Him. How truly did the Prophet in the Psalm say, He that sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision, for that which was meant to increase His misery revealed His majesty! Moreover, though it was intended to add an ingredient of bitterness to His cup, I do not doubt that it supplied Him with a draught of comfort. Nothing could so well have cheered the heart of Jesus and taken His mind off, for just an instant, His own hitter pangs, as having an object of pity before Him, upon whom He could pour His mercy! The thiefs confession of faith and expiring prayer must have been music to his Saviors earsthe only music which could in any degree delight Him amid His terrible agonies. To hear and to answer the prayer, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom, afforded our Lord a precious solace. An angel strengthened Him in the Garden, but here it was a man, nailed up at His side, who ministered consolation by the indirect, but very effective method of seeking help at His hands.

Furthermore, the longs-continued testimony and witness for Christ among men was at that time exceedingly feeble and ready to expire, but the thiefs confession maintained it. The Apostles, where were they? They had fled. Those disciples who ventured near enough to see the Lord, scarcely remained within speaking distance. They were poor confessors of Christ, scarcely worthy of the name! Was the chain of testimony to be broken? Would none declare His Sovereign Power? No, the Lord will never let that testimony cease, and lo, He raises up a witness where least you would expect iton a cross! One just ready to die bears witness to the Redeemers innocence and to His assured coming to a Kingdom! As many of the boldest testimonies to Christ have come from the stake, so here was one that came from a cross and gained for the witness the honor of being the last testifier to Christ before He died!

Let us always expect, then, dear Friends, that God will overrule the machinations of the foes of Christ so as to get honor from them. At all times of the worlds history, when things appear to have gone to pieces and Satan seems to rule the hour, do not let us despair, but be quite sure that, somehow or other, the Light of God will come out of darkness and good out of evil!

We will now come close up to the dying thief and look, first, at his faith. Secondly, at his confession of faith. Thirdly, at his prayer of faith. And fourthly, at the answer of his faith. First, then, may the Holy Spirit help us concerning this dying malefactor, to consider

I. HIS FAITH.   
It was of the operation of the Spirit of God and there was nothing in his previous character to lead up to it. How came that thief to be a Believer in Jesus? You who carefully read the Gospels will have noticed that Matthew says (Matt 27:44), The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. Mark also says, They that were crucified with Him reviled Him. These two Evangelists plainly speak of both thieves as reviling our Lord! How are we to understand this? Would it be right to say that those two writers speak in broad terms of the thieves as a class because one of them so acted, just as we in common conversation speak of a company of persons doing such-and-such, when, in fact, the whole matter was the deed of one man of the party? Was it a loose way of speaking? I think not! I do not like the look of suppositions of error in the Inspired volume. Would it not be more reverent to the Word of God to believe that the thieves did both revile Jesus? May it not be true that, at the first, they both joined in saying, If you are the Christ, save Yourself and us, but that afterwards, one, by a miracle of Sovereign Grace, was led to a change of mind and became a Believer? Or would this third theory meet the casethat at the first the thief who afterwards became a penitent, having no thought upon the matter, by his silence gave consent to his fellows reviling so as fairly to come under the charge of being an accomplice thereinbut when it gradually dawned upon his mind that he was under error as to this Jesus of Nazareth, it pleased God in Infinite Mercy to change his mind so that he became a confessor of the Truth of God, though he had at first silently assented to the blasphemy of his companion? It would be idle to dogmatize, but we will gather this lesson from itthat faith may enter the mind, notwithstanding the sinful state in which the man is found. Grace can transform a reviling thief into a penitent Believer!

Neither do we know the outward means which led to this mans conversion. We can only suppose that he was affected by seeing the Lords patient demeanor, or, perhaps, by hearing that prayer, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Surely there was enough in the sight of the Crucified Lord with the blessing of Gods Spirit to turn a heart of stone into flesh! Possibly the inscription over the head of our Lord may have helped himJesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Being a Jew, he knew something of the Scriptures, and putting all the facts together, may he not have seen in the prophecies a light which gathered around the head of the Sufferer and revealed Him as the true Messiah? Possibly the malefactor remembered Isaiahs words, He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Or, perhaps, the saying of David, in the 22nd Psalm rushed upon his memory, They pierced My hands and My feet. Other texts which he had learned in his youth at his mothers knee may have come before his mindand putting all these together, he may have argued, It may be. Perhaps it is. It is. It must be. I am sure it is. It is the Messiah, led as a lamb to the slaughter. All this is but our supposition and it leads me to remark that there is much faith in this world which comes, not with observation, but is worked in men by unknown instrumentalities. And so long as it really exists, it matters very little how it entered the heart, for in every case it is the work of the Holy Spirit! The history of faith is of small importance compared with the quality of faith!   
We do not know the origin of this mans faith, but we do know that it was amazing faith under the circumstances. I very gravely question whether there was ever greater faith in this world than the faith of this thief, for he, beyond all others, realized the painful and shameful death of the Lord Jesus and yet believed! We hear of our Lords dying upon the Cross, but we do not realize the circumstances and, indeed, even if we were to think upon that death very long and intently, we shall never realize the shame, weakness and misery which surrounded our Lord as that dying thief did, for he was suffering the pangs of crucifixion at the Saviors side and, therefore, to him it was no fiction, but a vivid reality! Before him was the Christ in all His nakedness and ignominy surrounded by the mocking multitudeand dying in pain and weaknessand yet he believed Him to be Lord and King! What do you think, Sirs? Some of you say you find it hard to believe in Jesus, though you know that He is exalted in the highest heavens. But had you seen Him on the Cross. Had you seen His marred Countenance and emaciated body, could you then have believed on Him and said, Lord remember me when you come into Your Kingdom? Yes, you could have done so if the Spirit of God had created faith in you like that of the thief! But it would have been faith of the first order, a jewel of priceless value! As I said before, so I say again the vivid sympathy of the thief with the shame and suffering of the Lord rendered his faith remarkable in the highest degree!   
This mans faith, moreover, was singularly clear and decided. He rolled his whole salvation upon the Lord Jesus and said, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. He did not offer a single plea fetched from his works, his present feelings, or his sufferingshe cast himself upon the generous heart of Christ! You have a KingdomYou are going to it. Lord, remember me when You come into it. That was all. I wish that some who have been professors for years had as clear a faith as the thiefbut they are too often confused between Law and Gospel, works and Gracewhile this poor felon trusted in nothing but the Savior and His mercy. Blessed be God for clear faith! I rejoice to see it in such a case as this, so suddenly worked and yet so perfectso outspoken, so intelligent, so thoroughly restful!   
That word, restful, reminds me of a lovely characteristic of his faith, namely, its deep peace-giving power. There is a world of rest in Jesus in the thiefs prayer, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. A thought from Christ is all he needed! And after the Lord said, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise, we never read that the petitioner said another word. I did think that, perhaps, he would have said, Blessed be the name of the Lord for that sweet assurance. Now I can die in peace. But his gratitude was too deep for words and his peace so perfect that calm silence seemed most in harmony with it. Silence is the thaw of the soul, though it is the frost of the mouthand when the soul flows most freely, it feels the inadequacy of the narrow channel of the lips for its great water floods   
*Come, then, expressive silence, muse His praise.* He asked no alleviation of pain, but in perfect satisfaction died as calmly as saints do in their beds!  
This is the kind of faith which we must all have if we would be saved. Whether we know how we come by it or not, it must be a faith which rolls itself upon Christ and a faith which consequently brings peace to the soul. Do you possess such faith, dear Friend? If you do not, remember that you may die all of a sudden, and then into Paradise you will never enter! Look well to this and believe in the Lord Jesus at once! And now in the second place, we are going to look at this mans   
II. CONFESSION OF FAITH.   
He had faith and he confessed it. He could neither be baptized nor sit at the Communion Table, nor unite with the Church below. He could not do any of those things which are most right and proper on the part of other Christians, but he did the best he could under the circumstances to confess his Lord!   
He confessed Christ, first of all, almost of necessity, because a holy indignation made him speak out. He listened for a while to his brother thief, but while he was musing, the fire burned and then spoke he with his tongue, for he could no longer bear to hear the innocent Sufferer reviled. He said, Do not you fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man has done nothing amiss. Did this poor thief speak out so bravely and can some of you silent Christians go up and down the streets and hear men curse and blaspheme the name of Christand not feel stirred in spirit to defend His cause? While men are so loud in their reviling, can you be quiet? The stones you tread on may well cry out against you! If all were Christians and the world teemed with Jesus praise, we might, perhaps, afford to be silent. But, amidst abounding superstition and loud-mouthed infidelity, we are bound to show our colors and avow ourselves on Christs side! We doubt not that the penitent thief would have owned his Lord apart from the railing of his comrade, but as it happened, that reviling was the provoking cause. Does no such cause arouse you? Can you play the coward at such a time as this?   
Observe next, that he made a confession to an unsympathetic ear. The other thief does not seem to have made any kind of reply to him, but it is feared that he died in sullen unbelief. The believing thief made his confession where he could not expect to gain approbation, yet he made it none the less clearly. How is it that some dear friends who love the Lord have never confessed their faith even to their Christian Brothers and Sisters? You know how glad we would be to hear of what the Lord has done for you, but yet we have not heard it! There is a mother who would be so happy if she did but know that her boy was saved, or that her girl was convertedand you have refused her that joy by your silence! This poor thief spoke for Jesus to one who did not enter into his religious experienceand you have not even told yours to those who would have communed with you and rewarded you with comfort and instruction! I cannot understand cowardly lovers of Christ! How you manage to smother your love so long, I cannot tell. Love is usually like a cough, which speaks for itself, or a candle which must be seen, or a sweet perfume which is its own revealer! How is it that you have been able to conceal the day which has dawned in your hearts? What can be your motive for coming to Jesus only by night? I cannot understand your riddle and I hope you will explain it away. Do confess Jesus if you love Him, for He bids you do it and says, He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven.   
Observe well that this poor thiefs confession of faith was attended with a confession of sin. Though he was dying a most horrible death by crucifixion, yet he confessed that he was suffering justly. We indeed justly. He made his confession not only to God, but to men, justifying the law of his country under which he was then suffering. True faith confesses Christ and, at the same time, confesses its sin. There must be repentance of sin and acknowledgment of it before God if faith is to give proof of its authenticity. A faith that never had a tear in its eye, or a blush on its cheek, is not the faith of Gods elect! He who never felt the burden of sin, never felt the sweetness of being delivered from it! This poor thief is as clear in the avowal of his own guilt as in his witness to the Redeemers innocence! Reader, could we say the same of you?  
The thiefs confession of faith was exceedingly honoring to the Lord Jesus Christ. He confessed that Jesus of Nazareth had done nothing amisswhen the crowd around the Cross were condemning Him with speech and gesture! He honored Christ by calling Him, Lord, while others mocked Him. He honored Christ by believing in His Kingdom even while Jesus was dying on the Cross and by entreating Him to remember him though he was in the agonies of death. Do you say that this was not much? Well, I will make bold to ask many a professor whether he could honestly say that throughout the whole of his life he has done as much to honor Christ as this poor thief did in those few minutes! Some of you certainly have not, for you have never confessed Him at all! And others have confessed Him in such a formal manner that there was nothing in it. Oh, there have been times when, had you played the man and said right straight out, in the midst of a ribald crew, I do believe in Him whom you scoff and I know the sweetness of that dear name which you trample under foot, you might have been the means of saving many soulsbut you were silent and whispered to yourself that prudence was the better part of valor and so you allowed the honor of your Master to be trailed in the mire! Oh, had you, my Sister, taken your stand in the familyhad you said, You may do what you will, but as for me, I will serve the Lordyou might have honored God far more than you have done, for I fear you have been living in a halting, hesitating style, giving way to a great deal which you knew was wrong, not bearing your protest, not rebuking your brother in his iniquity, but studying your own peace and comfort instead of seeking the Redeemers Glory! We have heard people talk about this dying thief as if he never did anything for his Master, but let me ask the Christian Church if it has not members in its midstgrayhaired members, too, who have never, through 50 years of profession, borne one such bravely honest and explicit testimony for Christ as this man did while he was agonizing on a cross? Remember, the mans hands and feet were tortured and he was suffering from that natural fever which attends upon crucifixion! His spirit must have melted within him with his dying griefand yet he was as bold in rebuke, as composed in prayer, and as calm in spirit as if he were suffering nothing! And thus he reflected much Glory upon his Lord.

One other point about this mans confession is worthy of notice, namely, that he was evidently anxious to change the mind of his companion. He rebuked him and he reasoned with him. Dear Friends, I must again put a personal question. Are there not many professing Christians who have never manifested a tithe as much anxiety for the souls of others as this thief felt? You have been a Church member 10 years, but did you ever say as much to your brother as this dying thief said to the one who was hanging near him? Well, you have meant to do so. Yes, but did you ever do it? You reply that you have been very glad to join others in a meeting. I know that, too, and so far so good! But did you ever personally say as much to another as this dying man did to his old companion? I fear that some of you cannot say so. I, for my part, bless and magnify the Grace of God which gave this man one of the sweet fruits of the Spirit, namely, holy charity towards the soul of another so soon after he, himself, had come to believe in Jesus! May we, all of us, have it yet more and more! So much for the confession of his faith. Now a little, in the third place, about   
III. HIS PRAYER OF FAITH.   
Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. He addressed the dying Savior as Divine. Wonderful faith this, to call Him Lord who was a worm and no man, and was hanging there upon the Cross to die! What shall we say of those who, now that He is exalted in the highest heavens, yet refuse to acknowledge His Deity? This man had a clearer knowledge of Christ than they have! The Lord take the scales from their eyes and make them pray to Jesus as Divine!   
He prayed to Him, also, as having a kingdom. That needed faith, did it not? He saw a dying Man in the hands of His foes nailed to the Cross and yet he believed that He would come into a kingdom! He knew that Jesus would die before long, the marks of the death-agony were upon Himand yet he believed that He would come to a kingdom! O glorious faith! Dear Friend, do you believe in Christs Kingdom? Do you believe that He reigns in Heaven and that He will come a second time to rule over all the earth? Do you believe in Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords? Then pray to Him as such, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. May God give you the faith which set this thief a praying in so excellent a fashion!   
Observe that his prayer was for a spiritual blessing only. The other thief said, Save Yourself and us! He meant, Save us from this cross. Deliver us from the death which now threatens us! He sought temporal benefits, but this man asked only to be remembered by Christ in His Kingdom. Do your prayers run that way, dear Friends? Then I bless the Lord that He has taught you to seek eternal, rather than temporal blessings! If a sick man cares more for pardon than for health, it is a good sign. Soul mercies will be prized above all others where faith is in active exercise.  
Observe how humbly he prays. He did not ask for a place at Christs right hand. He did not, in fact, ask the Lord to do anything for him, but only to remember him. Yet that, remember, is a great word and he meant much by it. Do give a thought to Your poor companion who now confesses his faith in You. Do in Your Glory dart one recollection of Your love upon poor me and think on me for good. It was a very humble prayer and all the sweeter for its lowliness. It showed his great faith in Jesus, far he believed that even to be remembered by Him would be enough. Give me but the crumbs that fall from Your table, and they shall suffice me. But a thought, Lord Jesus, but one thought from Your loving mind, and that shall satisfy my soul.   
Did not his prayer drip with faith as a honeycomb with honey? It seems to me as if it laid soaking in his faith till it was saturated through and through with it, for he prays so powerfully, albeit so humbly. Consider what his character had been, and yet he says, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. Note well that it is a thiefan outcast, a criminal on the gallows who thus prays! He is an outcast by his countrys laws and yet he turns to the King of Heaven and asks to be remembered! Bad as he is, he believes that the Lord Jesus will have mercy upon him! Oh, brave faith!   
We see how strong that faith was because he had no invitation to pray. I do not know that he had ever heard Christ preach. No Apostle had said to him, Come to Christ and you will find mercy, and yet he came to Jesus! Here comes an uninvited guest in the sweet bravery of holy confidence in Christs majestic lovehe comes boldly and pleads, Lord, remember me! It was strong faith which thus pleaded. Remember, too, that he was upon the verge of death. He knew that he could not live very long and probably expected the Roman bone-breaker to give him, very soon, the final blow! But in the very hour and article of death he cried, Lord, remember me, with the strong confidence of a mighty faith. Glory be to God who worked such a faith in such a man as this! We have done when we have mentioned, in the fourth place   
IV. THE ANSWER TO HIS FAITH.  
We will only say that his faith brought him to Paradise. We had a Paradise, once, and the first Adam lost it. Paradise has been regained by the Second Adam, and He has prepared for Believers an Eden above, fairer than that first Garden of delights below! Faith led the dying thief to be with Christ in Paradise which was best of all! Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Whatever the joy of Christ, and the Glory of Christ, the thief was there to see it and to share it as soon as Christ Himself!   
And it brought him Paradise that very day. Sometimes a crucified man will be two or three days a-dying. Jesus, therefore, assures him that he shall not have long to suffer and confirms it with a, verily, which was our Lords strong word of asseveration, Verily I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Such a portion will faith win for each of us, not today, perhaps, but one day. If we believe in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, we shall be with Him in the delights and happiness of the spirit world and with Him in the Paradise of everlasting Glory. If we commenced to believe at once and were to die immediately, we would be with Christ at once, as surely as if we had been converted 50 years ago! You cannot tell how short your life will be, but it is well to be ready. A friend was here last Lords-Day of whom I heard this morning that he was illand in another hour that he was dead. It was short work. He was struck down and gone at once. That may be the lot of any one of you. And if it should be, you will have no cause whatever to fear it if you now, like the thief, trust yourself wholly in Jesus hands, crying, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom.   
The lesson of our text is not merely that Christ can save in our last extremity, though that is true, but that now, at this moment, Jesus is able to save us, and that, if saved at all, salvation must be an immediate and complete act, so that, come life or come death, we are perfectly saved! It will not take the Lord long to raise the deadin a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead shall be raised incorruptibleand the Lord takes no time in regenerating a soul. Dead souls live in an instant when the breath of the Spirit quickens them! Faith brings instantaneous pardon! There is no course of probation to go through! There are no attainments to be sought after and no protracted efforts to be made in order to be saved. You are saved if you believe in Jesus! The finished work of Christ is yours. You are Gods beloved, accepted, forgiven, adopted child! Saved you are, and saved you shall be forever and ever if you believe!   
Instantaneous salvation! Immediate salvation! This, the Spirit of God gives to those who trust in Jesus! You need not wait till tomorrows sun has dawned. Talk not of a more convenient season. Sitting where you are, the Almighty Grace of God can come upon you and save youand this shall be a sign unto you that Christ is born in your heart, the hope of Glorywhen you believe in Him as your Pardon, Righteousness, and All-in-All, you shall have peace. If you do but trust yourself in Jesus hands, you are a saved soul and the angels in Heaven are singing high praises to God and the Lamb on your account! Farewell.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-24.**

Verse 1. Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother. This brother had been put to great shame. He was beaten before the judgment seat, if you remember, and now he has the great and lasting honor of being mentioned by the Apostle with himself. God will honor those who bear dishonor for His names sake. Be not ashamed even to be beaten for Christthe stripes are stripes of glory!

2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. The Epistles were written to distinct churches, but they have a bearing upon all Christians. Hence the Apostle says, With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us thank God no Scripture is of private interpretationevery promise belongs to all the Seed. If you are a Believer, you may freely appropriate to yourselves whatever was said of old to any individual Believer, or to any congregation of Believers!

3, 4. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. Paul is a great preacher of Divine Grace and, therefore, he is a great giver of thanks. Grace should be followed with thankfulness. I thank my God. What a beautiful expression! Not only, I thank God, but, I thank my God. He has God in possession! He has taken Him to be his own forever and ever! Beloved, have we all done the same? Can we say, I thank my God? You notice how often Paul, in the first ten verses mentions the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think it is 11 times. He was full of Christ. Not only did he love Christ in his heart, but he had Christs name continually on his tongue, for he was not ashamed of the sweet name of Jesus Christ! Honey in the mouth, music in the ear, Heaven in the heart is that sweet name of Jesus!

5. That in everything you are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge. The church of Corinth was a church of all the talentsit was not, however, a church so much of all the Graces, and so it was a very poor example for us. I sometimes think that its mode of worship is recorded rather as a warning beacon than as an example to us. It caused, incidentally through the abundance of their gifts and everybody wanting to exercise his gift, great divisions, and there was an absence of humility and love in the church. However, Paul is thankful for what they have.

6, 7. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that you come behind in no gift: waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a fine trait in their characterthey did look to the Second Adventit operated upon them, it helped them in many ways. We cannot now mention all the holy uses which lie in the warning for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it ought to be a good description of all Christians.

8, 9. Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful. Blessed is His name that He is. We are often very unfaithful. Man is always so, but God is faithful.

9, 10. By whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Where it is not so, the life of piety seems to ooze away. The blessing of God cannot rest upon a church unless we dwell together in unity, and for unity it is necessary that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11-15. For it has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that everyone of you says, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. It may have been an accidental circumstance that he did not happen to have baptized them, but he is glad of it, for he says that in the temper they were in, some of them would have made a boast of it.

16, 17. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. There were other people who could baptize for him. It was enough that he should concentrate all his energies upon that one matter of preaching the Gospelnot that he neglected the Divine commandbut that it was not necessary that he, any more than his Master, should personally baptize, for we read that, Jesus Christ baptized not, but His disciples. Not to put a dishonor upon the ordinance, but to let us see that the ordinance does not depend upon the man, but upon that sacred name into which we are baptizedand upon the true faith of the person baptized.

17. Not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect. A very remarkable passage! Paul could have used the wisdom of words. In some of his Epistles he gives us a specimen of his mighty rhetoric. He was a born master of speech. There was a touch of poetry in him and always a high logical power, but he would not use it in his preaching, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect. You may do what you like with human wisdomput a bit into its mouth and try to lead it into obedience to Christbut somehow or other its tendency is to rebel against Him!

18-21. For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. You have only to study the history of the world at the time when Paul was writing, and you will see that the world, by wisdom knew not God. It had made itself exceedingly philosophical and sage, but if you weigh its wisest conclusions, you will find that they were only polished folly. There is nothing left us of all the wisdom of that period! Time itself has proved itno, has disproved it!

21, 22. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign. Some miracle, something that shall attest it in a supernatural way.

22-24. And the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Beloved, you know how true this is! It has been a wonderful power in you, and this day it is the only wisdom which you desire to possess!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1881 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE DYING THIEF IN A NEW LIGHT

NO. 1881

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JANUARY 31, 1886, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 23, 1885.

**But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation?   
And we, indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man has done nothing wrong.   
And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom.   
Luke 23:40-42.**

A GREAT many persons, whenever they hear of the conversion of the dying thief, remember that he was saved in the very article of death and they dwell upon that fact, and that, alone. He has always been quoted as a case of salvation at the 11th hour and so, indeed, he is. In his case it is proven that as long as a man can repent, he can obtain forgiveness. The Cross of Christ avails even for a man hanging on a gallows and drawing near to his last breath. He who is mighty to save was mighty, even during His own death, to pluck others from the grasp of the Destroyer, though they were in the act of expiring.

But that is not everything which the story teaches us and it is always a pity to look exclusively upon one pointand thus to miss everything elseperhaps miss that which is more important! So often has this been the case that it has produced a sort of revulsion of feeling in certain minds, so that they have been driven in a wrong direction by their wish to protest against what they think to be a common error. I read the other day that this story of the dying thief ought not to be taken as an encouragement to death-bed repentance! Brothers, if the author meantand I do not think he didthat this ought never to be so used as to lead people to postpone repentance to a dying bed, he spoke correctly. No Christian man could or would use it so injuriouslyhe must be hopelessly bad who would draw from Gods long-suffering an argument for continuing in sin!

I trust, however, that the narrative is not often so used, even by the worst of men, and I feel sure that it will not be so used by any of you. It cannot be properly turned to such a purposeit might be used as an encouragement to thieving just as much as to the delay of repentance. I might say, I may be a thief because this thief was saved, just as rationally as I might say, I may put off repentance because this thief was saved when he was about to die. The fact is, there is nothing so good but men can pervert it into evil if they have evil hearts! The justice of God is made a motive for despair and His mercy an argument for sin! Wicked men will drown themselves in the rivers of the Truth of God as readily as in the pools of error! He that has a mind to destroy himself can choke his soul with the Bread of life, or dash himself in pieces against the Rock of Ages. There is no doctrine of the Grace of God so gracious that graceless men may not turn it into licentiousness.

I venture, however, to say that if I stood by the bedside of a dying man, tonight, and I found him anxious about his soul, but fearful that Christ could not save him because repentance had been put off so late, I would certainly quote the dying thief to himand I would do it with good conscienceand without hesitation. I would tell him that, though he was as near to dying as the thief upon the cross was, yet if he repented of his sin and turned his face believingly to Christ, he would find eternal life. I would do this with all my heart, rejoicing that I had such a story to tell one at the gates of eternity! I do not think that I would be censured by the Holy Spirit for thus using a narrative which He has, Himself, recorded recorded with the foresight that it would be so used. I would feel, at any rate, in my own heart, a sweet conviction that I had treated the subject as I ought to have treated itand as it was intended to be used for men in extremis whose hearts are turning towards the living God. Oh, yes, poor Soul, whatever your age, or whatever the period of life to which you have come, you may now find eternal life by faith in Christ!

*The dying thief rejoiced to see   
That Fountain in his day   
And there may you, though vile as he,   
Wash all your sins away.*

Many good people think that they ought to guard the Gospel, but it is never so safe as when it stands out in its own naked majesty! It needs no covering from us. When we protect it with provisos, guard it with exceptions and qualify it with observations, it is like David in Sauls armorit is hampered and hindered and you may even hear it cry, I cannot go with these. Let the Gospel alone and it will save! Qualify it and the salt has lost its savor. I will venture to put it thus to you. I have heard it said that few are ever converted in old age and this is thought to be a statement which will prove exceedingly awakening and impressive for the young. It certainly wears that appearance, but, on the other hand, it is a statement very discouraging to the old! I object to the frequent repetition of such statements, for I do not find their counterpart in the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles!

Assuredly our Lord spoke of some who entered the vineyard at the 11th hour of the day. And among His miracles, He not only saved those who were dying, but even raised the dead! Nothing can be concluded from the Words of the Lord Jesus against the salvation of men at any hour or age! I tell you, that in the business of your acceptance with God, through faith in Christ Jesus, it does not matter what age you are! The same promise is to each of you, Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. And whether you are in the earliest stage of life, or are within a few hours of eternity, if you fly for refuge, now, to the hope set before you in the Gospel, you shall be saved! The Gospel that I preach excludes none on the ground either of age or character!

Whoever you may be, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, is the message we have to deliver to you! If we address to you the longer form of the Gospel, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, this is true of every living person, be his age whatever it may! I am not afraid that this story of the dying and repenting thief who went straight from the cross to the crown, will be used by you wrongly, but if you are wicked enough to use it so, I cannot help it. It will only fulfill that solemn Scripture which says that the Gospel is a savor of death unto death to some, even that very Gospel which is a savor of life unto life to others!

But I do not think, dear Friends, that the only specialty about the thief is the lateness of his repentance. So far from being the only point of interest, it is not even the chief point! To some minds, at any rate, other points will be even more remarkable. I want to show you very briefly that there was a specialty in his case as to the means of his conversion. Secondly, a specialty in his faith. Thirdly, a specialty in the result of his faith while he was here below. And, fourthly, a specialty in the promise won by his faiththe promise fulfilled to him in Paradise.

I. First, then, I think you ought to notice very carefully THE SINGULARITY AND SPECIALITY OF THE MEANS BY WHICH THE THIEF WAS CONVERTED.

How do you think it was? Well, we do not know. We cannot tell. It seems to me that the man was an unconverted, impenitent thief when they nailed him to the cross because one of the Evangelists says, The thieves, also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. I know that this may have been a general statement and that it is reconcilable with its having been done by one thief, only, according to the methods commonly used by critics, but I am not enamored of critics even when they are friendly. I have such respect for Revelation that I never, in my own mind, permit the idea of discrepancies and mistakesand when the Evangelist says, they, I believe he meant, they, and that both these thieves did, at the beginning of their crucifixion, rail at the Christ with whom they were crucified. It would appear that by some means, or other, this thief must have been converted while he was on the cross. Assuredly nobody preached a sermon to him, no evangelistic address was delivered at the foot of his cross and no meeting was held for special prayer on his account. He does not even seem to have had an instruction, or an invitation, or an expostulation addressed to himand yet this man became a sincere and accepted Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Dwell upon this fact, if you please, and note its practical bearing upon the cases of many around us. There are many among my hearers who have been instructed from their childhood, who have been admonished, warned, entreated, invited and yet they have not come to Christwhile this man, without any of these advantagesnevertheless believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and found eternal life! O you that have lived under the sound of the Gospel from your childhood, the thief does not comfort you, but he accuses you! What are you doing to abide so long in unbelief? Will you never believe the testimony of Divine Love? What more shall I say to you? What more can anyone say to you?

What do you think could have converted this poor thief? It strikes me that it may have beenit must have beenthe sight of our great Lord and Savior! There was, to begin with, our Saviors wonderful behavior on the road to the Cross. Perhaps the robber had mixed up with all sorts of society, but he had never seen a Man like this. Never had cross been carried by a Cross-Bearer of His look and fashion. The robber wondered who this meek and majestic Person could be. He heard the women weep and he wondered, in himself, whether anybody would ever weep for him. He thought that this must be some very singular Person that the people should stand about Him with tears in their eyes. When he heard that mysterious Sufferer say so solemnly, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for your children, he must have been struck with wonder! When he came to think, in his death-pangs, of the singular look of pity which Jesus cast on the women and of the self-forgetfulness which gleamed from His eyes, he was smitten with a strange relentingit was as if an angel had crossed his path and opened his eyes to a new worldand to a new form of manhood, the likes of which he had never seen before.

He and his companion were coarse, rough fellows. This was a delicately formed and fashioned Being, of superior order to himself, yes, and of superior order to any other of the sons of men! Who could He be? What must He be? Though he could see that He suffered and fainted as He went along, he marked that there was no word of complaining, no note of execration in return for the reviling cast upon Him. His eyes looked love on those who glared on Him with hate! Surely that march along the Via Dolorosa was the first part of the sermon which God preached to that bad mans heart. It was preached to many others who did not regard its teaching, but upon this man, by Gods special Grace, it had a softening effect when he came to think over it and consider it. Was it not a likely and convincing means of Grace?

When he saw the Savior surrounded by the Roman soldierssaw the executioners bring forth the hammers and the nails and lay Him down upon His back and drive the nails into His hands and feetthis crucified criminal was startled and astonished as he heard Him say, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. He, himself, had probably met his executioners with a curse, but he heard this Man breathe a prayer to the great Father! And, as a Jew, as he probably was, he understood what was meant by such a prayer. But it did astound him to hear Jesus pray for his murderers. That was a petition, the like of which he had never heard nor even dreamed of! From whose lips could it come but from the lips of a Divine Being? Such a loving, forgiving, God-like prayer proved Him to be the Messiah! Who else had ever prayed so? Certainly not David and the kings of Israel, who, on the contrary, in all honesty and heartiness imprecated the wrath of God upon their enemies! Elijah himself would not have prayed in that fashion, rather would he have called fire from Heaven on the centurion and his company. It was a new, strange sound to him. I do not suppose that he appreciated it to the fullest, but I can well believe that it deeply impressed him and made him feel that his Fellow-Sufferer was a Being about whom there was an exceedingly mystery of goodness.

And when the Cross was lifted up, that thief hanging on his own cross looked around and I suppose he could see that inscription written in three languagesJesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. If so, that writing was his little Bible, his New Testamentand he interpreted it by what he knew of the Old Testament. Putting this and that togetherthat strange Person, incarnate loveliness, all patience and all majesty, that strange prayer and now this singular inscription, surely he who knew the Old Testament, as I have no doubt he did, would say to himself, Is this He? Is this truly the King of the Jews? This is He who worked miracles, raised the dead and said that He was the Son of Godis it all true and is He really our Messiah? Then he would remember the words of the Prophet Isaiah, He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. Surely, He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Why, he would say to himself, I never understood that passage in the Prophet Isaiah before, but it must point to Him! The chastisement of our peace is upon Him. Can this be He who cried in the Psalmsthey pierced My hands and My feet?

As he looked at Him again, he felt in his soul, It must be He! Could there be another so like He? He felt conviction creeping over his spirit. Then he looked again and he marked how all men down below rejected, despised and hissed at Him. They hooted Him and all this would make the case the more clear. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.

Perhaps this dying thief read the Gospel out of the lips of Christs enemies. They saidHe saved others. Ah! he thought, did He save others? Why could He not save me? What a grand bit of Gospel that was for the dying thiefHe saved others! I think I could swim to Heaven on that plankHe saved others and, if He saved others, He can surely save me!

Thus the very things that the enemies disdainfully threw at Christ would be Gospel to this poor dying man. When it has been my misery to read any of the wretched prints that are sent us out of scorn, in which our Lord is held up to ridicule, I have thought, Why, perhaps those who read these loathsome blasphemies may, nevertheless, learn the Gospel from them! You may pick a jewel from a dunghill and find its radiance undiminished! And you may gather the Gospel from a blasphemous mouth and it shall be, none the less, the Gospel of salvation! Perhaps this man learned the Gospel from those who jested at our dying Lord and so the servants of the devil were unconsciously made to be the servants of Christ!

But, after all, surely that which won him most must have been to look at Jesus, again, as He was hanging upon the cruel tree. Possibly nothing about the physical Person of Christ would be attractive to him, for His visage was more marred than that of any man and His form more than the sons of men. But there must have been in that blessed face a singular charm. Was it not the very image of perfection? As I conceive the face of Christ, it was very different from anything that any painter has yet been able to place upon his canvas. It was all goodness, kindness and unselfishnessand yet it was a royal face! It was a face of superlative justice and unrivalled tenderness. Righteousness and uprightness sat upon His brow, but infinite pity and goodwill to men had also taken up their abode. It was a face that would have struck you at once as one by itself, never to be forgotten, never to be fully understood. It was all sorrow, yet all love! It was all meekness, yet all resolution! All wisdom, yet all simplicity! The face of a child, or an angel and yet peculiarly the face of a Man. Majesty and misery, suffering and sacredness were strangely combined in it. He was evidently the Lamb of God and the Son of Man.

As the robber looked, he believed. Is it not amazingthe very sight of the Master won him? The sight of the Lord in agony, shame and death! Scarcely a word. Certainly no sermon, no attending worship on the Sabbath. No reading of gracious books; no appeal from mother, or teacher, or friend. The sight of Jesus won him! I put it down as a very singular thing, a thing for you and for me to remember and dwell upon with quite as much vividness as we do upon the lateness of this robbers conversion!

Oh, that God in His mercy might convert everybody in this Tabernacle! Oh, that I could have a share in it by the preaching of His Word! But I will be equally happy if you get to Heaven anywayyes, if the Lord should take you there without outward ministries, leading you to Jesus by some simple method such as He adopted with this thief! If you do but get there, He shall have the Glory for it, and His poor servant will be overjoyed! Oh, that you would now look to Jesus and live! Before your eyes He is set forth, evidently crucified among you. Look to Him and be saved, even at this hour!

II. But now I want you to think with me a little upon THE SPECIALITY OF THIS MANS FAITH, for I think it was a very singular faith that this man exerted towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

I greatly question whether the equal and the parallel of the dying thiefs faith will be readily found outside the Scriptures, or even in the Scriptures!

Observe that this man believed in Christ when he literally saw Him dying the death of a felon, under circumstances of the greatest personal shame! You have never realized what it was to be crucified. None of you could do that, for the sight has never been seen in our day in England. There is not a man or woman here who has ever realized in their own mind the actual death of Christ. It stands beyond us. This man saw it with his own eyes and for him to call Him, Lord, who was hanging on a gallows, was no small triumph of faith! For him to ask Jesus to remember him when He came into His Kingdom, though he saw Jesus bleeding His life away and hounded to death, was a splendid act of reliance! For him to commit his everlasting destiny into the hands of One who was, to all appearance, unable, even, to preserve His own life, was a noble achievement of faith! I say that this dying thief leads the van in the matter of faith, for what he saw of the circumstances of the Savior was calculated to contradict rather than help his confidence! What he saw was to his hindrance rather than to his help, for he saw our Lord in the very extremity of agony and deathand yet he believed in Him as the King shortly to come into His Kingdom!

Remember, too, that at that moment when the thief believed in Christ, all the disciples had forsaken Him and fled. John might be lingering at a little distance and holy women may have stood farther off, but no one was present to bravely champion the dying Christ. Judas had sold Him, Peter had denied Him and the rest had forsaken Him! And it was then that the dying thief called Him, Lord, and said, Remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. I call that splendid faith! Why, some of you do not believe even though you are surrounded with Christian friendseven though you are urged on by the testimony of those whom you regard with love! But this man, all alone, comes out and calls Jesus his Lord! No one else was confessing Christ at that momentno revival was around him with enthusiastic crowdshe was all by himself as a confessor of his Lord. After our Lord was nailed to the tree, the first to bear witness for Him was this thief. The centurion bore witness afterwards, when our Lord expired, but this thief was a lone confessor, holding on to Christ when nobody would say, Amen to what he said. Even his fellow thief was mocking at the crucified Savior, so that this man shone as a lone star in the midnight darkness. O Sirs, dare you be Daniels? Dare you stand alone? Would you dare to stand out amidst a ribald crew and say, Jesus is my King. I only ask Him to remember me when He comes into His Kingdom? Would you be likely to proclaim such a faith when priests and scribes, princes and people were all mocking at the Christ and deriding Him? Brothers, the dying robber exhibited marvelous faith and I beg you to think of this the next time you speak of him.

And it seems to me that another point adds splendor to that faith, namely, that he himself was in extreme torture. Remember, he was crucified. It was a crucified man trusting in a crucified Christ! Oh, when our frame is racked with torture; when the most tender nerves are pained; when our body is hung up to die by we know not what great length of tormentthen to forget the present and live in the future is a grand achievement of faith! While dying, to turn ones eyes to Another dying at your side and trust your soul with Him is very marvelous faith! Blessed thief, because they put you down at the bottom as one of the least of saints, I think that I must bid you come up higher and take one of the uppermost seats among those who, by faith have glorified the Christ of God!

Why, see, dear Friends, once more, the specialty of this mans faith was that he saw so much though his eyes had been opened for so short a time! He saw the future world! He was not a believer in annihilation, or in the possibility of a mans not being immortal! He evidently expected to be in another world and to be in existence when the dying Lord should come into His Kingdom! He believed all that and it is more than some do nowadays. He also believed that Jesus would have a Kingdom, a Kingdom after He was dead, a Kingdom though He was crucified! He believed that He was winning for Himself a Kingdom by those nailed hands and pierced feet! This was intelligent faith, was it not? He believed that Jesus would have a Kingdom in which others would share and, therefore, he aspired to have his portion in it. But yet he had fit views of himself and, therefore, he did not say, Lord, let me sit at Your right hand, or, Let me share in the dainties of Your palace. He only said, Remember me. Think of me. Cast an eye my way. Think of Your poor dying comrade on the cross at Your right hand. Lord, remember me. Remember me. I see deep humility in the prayer and yet a sweet, joyous, confident exaltation of the Christ at the time when the Christ was in His deepest humiliation!

Oh, dear Sirs, if any of you have thought of this dying thief only as one who put off repentance, I want you now to think of him as one that did greatly and grandly believe in Christ and oh, that you would do the same! Oh, that you would put a great confidence in my great Lord! Never did a poor sinner trust Christ too much. There was never a case of a guilty one who believed that Jesus could forgive him and, afterwards, found that He could notwho believed that Jesus could save him on the spot and then woke up to find that it was a delusion. No! Plunge into this river of confidence in Christ! The waters are waters to swim in, not to drown in! Never did a soul perish that glorified Christ by a living, loving faith in Him! Come, then, with all your sin, whatever it may bewith all your deep depression of spirit, with all your agony of consciencecome along with you and grasp my Lord and Master with both hands of your faith and He shall be yours and you shall be His

*Turn to Christ your longing eyes,   
View His bloody Sacrifice!   
See in Him your sins forgiven,   
Pardon, holiness and Heaven!   
Glorify the King of Kings,   
Take the peace the Gospel brings.*

I think that I have shown you something special in the means of the thiefs conversion and in his faith in our dying Lord.   
III. But now, thirdly, as God shall help me, I wish to show you another specialty, namely, in THE RESULT OF HIS FAITH.   
I have heard people say, Well, you see, the dying thief was converted, but then he was not baptized! He never went to communion and never joined the church! He could not do either and that which God Himself renders impossible to us, He does not demand of us. He was nailed to a crosshow could he be baptized? But he did a great deal more than that, for if he could not carry out the outward signs, he most manifestly exhibited the things which they signified, which, in his condition, was better still!   
This dying thief, first of all, confessed the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the very essence of Baptism. He confessed Christ. Did he not acknowledge Him to his fellow thief? It was as open a confession as he could make it. Did he not acknowledge Christ before all that were gathered around the Cross who were within hearing? It was as public a confession as he could possibly cause it to be! Yet certain cowardly fellows claim to be Christians though they have never confessed Christ to a single personand then they quote this poor thief as an excuse! Are they nailed to a cross? Are they dying in agony? Oh, no, and yet they talk as if they could claim the exemption which these circumstances would give them. What a dishonest piece of business!

The fact is that our Lord requires an open confession as well as a secret faith. And if you will not render it, there is no promise of salvation for you, but a threat of being denied at the last! The Apostle puts it, 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. It is stated in another place this wayHe that believes and is baptized shall be savedthat is Christs way of making the confession of Him. If there is a true faith, there must be a declaration of it. If you are candles and God has lit you, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Soldiers of Christ must, like her Majestys soldiers, wear their uniformsand if they are ashamed of themthey ought to be drummed out of the regiment! They are not honest soldiers who refuse to march in rank with their comrades. The very least thing that the Lord Jesus Christ can expect of us is that we confess Him to the best of our power. If you are nailed up to a cross, I will not invite you to be baptized. If you are fastened up to a tree to die, I will not ask you to come into this pulpit and declare your faith, for you cannot. But you are required to do what you can do, namely, to make as distinct and open an avowal of the Lord Jesus Christ as may be suitable in your present condition.   
I believe that many Christian people get into a deal of trouble through not being honest in their convictions. For instance, if a man goes into a workshop, or a soldier into a barracks, and if he does not fly his flag from the first, it will be very difficult for him to run it up afterwards. But if he immediately and boldly lets them know, I am a Christian and there are certain things that I cannot do to please you, and certain other things that I cannot help doing, though they displease youwhen that is clearly understood, after a while, the singularity of the thing will be gone and the man will be left alone. But if he is a little sneaky and thinks that he is going to please the world and please Christ, too, he is in for a rough time let him depend upon it! His life will be that of a toad under a harrow, or a fox in a dog kennel if he tries the way of compromise. That will never do! Come out! Show your colors! Let it be known who you are and what you areand although your course will not be smooth, it will certainly be not half as rough as if you tried to run with the hare and hunt with the houndsa very difficult piece of business that!   
This man came out, then and there, and made as open an avowal of his faith in Christ as was possible.   
The next thing he did was to rebuke his fellow sinner. He spoke to him in answer to the ribaldry with which he had assailed our Lord. I do not know what the unconverted convict had been blasphemously saying, but his converted comrade spoke very honestly to him. Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man has done nothing wrong. It is more than ever necessary in these days that believers in Christ should not allow sin to go unrebuked and yet a great many of them do so. Do you not know that a person who is silent when a wrong thing is said or done may become a participator in the sin? If you do not rebuke sinI mean, of course, on all fit occasions and in a proper spirityour silence will give consent to the sin and you will be an aider and abettor in it. A man who saw a robbery and who did not cry, Stop, thief! would be thought to be in league with the thief. And the man who can hear swearing, or see impurity and never utter a word of protest may well question whether he is right, himself. Our other mens sins make up a great item in our personal guilt unless we rebuke them. This our Lord expects us to do. The dying thief did it and did it with all his heartand in doing so far exceeded large numbers of those who hold their heads high in the Church!  
Next, the dying thief made a full confession of his guilt. He said to him who was hanged with him, Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly. Not many words, but what a world of meaning was in themwe, indeed, justly. You and I are dying for our crimes, he said, and we deserve to die. When a man is willing to confess that he deserves the wrath of Godthat he deserves the suffering which his sin has brought upon himthere is evidence of sincerity in him. In this mans case, his repentance glittered like a holy tear in the eye of his faith, so that his faith was jeweled with the drops of his penitence. As I have often told you, I suspect the faith which is not born as a twin with repentance, but there is no room for suspicion in the case of this penitent confessor. I pray God that you and I may have such a thorough work as this in our own hearts as the result of our faith.  
Then, see, this dying thief defends his Lord right manfully. He says, We, indeed, justly, but this Man has done nothing wrong. Was not that beautifully said? He did not say, This Man does not deserve to die, but, This Man has done nothing wrong. He means that He is perfectly innocent! He does not even say, He has done nothing wicked, but he even asserts that He has not acted unwisely or indiscreetlyThis Man has done nothing wrong. This is a glorious testimony of a dying man to One who was numbered with the transgressors and was being put to death because His enemies falsely accused Him. Beloved, I only pray that you and I may bear as good a witness to our Lord as this thief did! He outruns us all. We need not think much of the coming of his conversion late in lifewe may far rather consider how blessed was the testimony which he bore for his Lord when it was most needed! When all other voices were silent, one suffering penitent spoke out and saidThis Man has done nothing wrong.   
See, again, another mark of this mans faith. He prays and his prayer is directed to Jesus. Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. True faith is always praying faith. Behold, he prays, is one of the most sure tests of the new birth. Oh, Friends, may we abound in prayer, for thus we shall prove that our faith in Jesus Christ is what it ought to be! This converted robber opened his mouth wide in prayer. He prayed with great confidence as to the coming Kingdom and he sought that Kingdom first, even to the exclusion of all else. He might have asked for life, or for ease from pain, but he prefers the Kingdomand this is a high mark of Grace.  
In addition to thus praying, you will see that he adores and worships Jesus, for he says, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. The petition is worded as if he felt, Only let Christ think of me and it is enough. Let Him but remember me and the thought of His mind will be effectual for everything that I shall need in the world to come. This is to impute Godhead to Christ! If a man can cast his all upon the mere memory of a person, he must have a very high esteem of that person. If to be remembered by the Lord Jesus is all that this man asks, or desires, he pays to the Lord great honor. I think that there was about his prayer a worship equal to the eternal hallelujahs of cherubim and seraphim. There was in it a glorification of his Lord which is not excelled even by the endless symphonies of angelic spirits who surround the Throne of God! Thief, you have well done!   
Oh, that some penitent spirit here might be helped thus to believe, thus to confess, thus to defend his Master, thus to adore, thus to worshipand then the age of the convert would be a matter of the smallest imaginable consequence!   
IV. Now, the last remark is thisThere was something very special about the dying thief as to OUR LORDS WORDS TO HIM ABOUT THE WORLD TO COME. He said to him, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. He only asked the Lord to remember him, but he obtained this surprising answer, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.   
In some respects I envy this dying thief, for this reasonthat when the Lord pardoned me and pardoned the most of you who are present, He did not give us a place in Paradise that same day. We are not yet come to the rest which is promised to us. No, you are waiting here. Some of you have been waiting very long. It is 30 years with many of us. It is 40 years, it is 50 years with many others since the Lord blotted out your sins, and yet you are not with Him in Paradise. There is a dear member of this Church who, I suppose, has known the Lord for 75 years and she is still with us, having long passed the 90th year of her age. The Lord did not admit her to Paradise on the day of her conversion. He did not take any of us from Nature to Grace and from Grace to Glory, in a day. We have had to wait a good while. There is something for us to do in the wilderness and so we are kept out of the heavenly garden.   
I remember that Mr. Baxter said that he was not in a hurry to be gone to Heaven and a friend called upon Dr. John Owen, who had been writing about the Glory of Christ, and asked him what he thought of going to Heaven. That great Divine replied, I am longing to be there. Why, said the other, I have just spoken to holy Mr. Baxter and he says that he would prefer to be here, since he thinks that he can be more useful on earth. Oh, said Dr. Owen, my Brother Baxter is always full of practical godliness, but for all that I cannot say that I am at all desirous to linger in this mortal state. I would rather be gone. Each of these men, seems to me, to have been the half of Paul. Paul was made up of the two, for he was desirous to depart, but he was willing to remain because it was necessary for the people. We would put both together and, like Paul, have a strong desire to depart and to be with Christ, and yet be willing to wait if we can do service to our Lord and to His Church. Still, I think he has the best of it who is converted and enters Heaven the same night! This robber breakfasted with the devil, but he dined with Christ on earth and supped with Him in Paradise! This was short work, but blessed work! What a host of troubles he escaped! What a world of temptation he missed! What an evil world he left! He was just born, like a lamb dropped in the field, and then he was lifted into the Shepherds bosom straight away!

I do not remember the Lord ever saying this to anybody else. I dare say it may have happened that souls have been converted and have gone Home at once, but I never heard of anybody that had such an assurance from Christ as this man had. Verily, I say unto yousuch a personal assurance! Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Dying thief, you were favored above many, to be with Christ, which is far better, and to be with Him so soon!   
Why is it that our Lord does not thus imparadise all of us at once? It is because there is something for us to do on earth. My Brothers and Sisters, are you doing it? Are you doing it? Some good people are still on earth, but why? But why? What is the use of them? I cannot make it out. If they are, indeed, the Lords people, what are they here for? They get up in the morning and eat their breakfast and, in due course eat their dinner, their supper and go to bed and sleep. At a proper hour they get up the next morning and do the same as on the previous day. Is this living for Jesus? Is this life? It does not come to much. Can this be the life of God in man?   
Oh, Christian people, do justify your Lord in keeping you waiting here! How can you justify Him but by serving Him to the utmost of your power? The Lord help you to do so! Why, you owe as much to Him as the dying thief! I know I owe a great deal more. What a mercy it is to have been converted while you were yet a boy, to be brought to the Savior while you were yet a girl! What a debt of obligation young Christians owe to the Lord! And if this poor thief crammed a life full of testimony into a few minutes, ought not you and I, who are spared for years after conversion, to perform good service for our Lord?   
Come, let us wake up if we have been asleep! Let us begin to live if we have been half dead. May the Spirit of God yet make something of us, so that we may go as industrious servants from the labors of the vineyard to the pleasures of Paradise! To our once crucified Lord be Glory forever and ever! Amen.

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THE BELIEVING THIEF

NO. 2078

**DELIVERED ON LORDS DAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said unto him,   
Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Luke 23:42, 43.**

SOME time ago I preached upon the whole story of the dying thief. I do not propose to do the same today but only to look at it from one particular point of view. The story of the salvation of the dying thief is a standing instance of the power of Christ to save and of His abundant willingness to receive all that come to Him in whatever plight they may be. I cannot regard this act of Divine Grace as a solitary instance any more than the salvation of Zaccheus, the restoration of Peter, or the call of Saul, the persecutor. Every conversion is, in a sense, singularno two are exactly alike and yet any one conversion is a type of others.

The case of the dying thief is much more similar to our conversion than it is dissimilar. In point of fact his case may be regarded as typical rather than as an extraordinary incident. So I shall use it at this time. May the Holy Spirit speak through it to the encouragement of those who are ready to despair!

Remember, beloved Friends, that our Lord Jesus at the time He saved this malefactor was at His lowest. His Glory had been ebbing out in Gethsemane and before Caiaphas and Herod and Pilate. But it had now reached the utmost low water mark. Stripped of His garments and nailed to the Cross, our Lord was mocked by a ribald crowd and was dying in agonythen was He numbered with the transgressors, and made as the offscouring of all things. Yet while in that condition He achieved this marvelous deed of Divine Grace. Behold the wonder worked by the Savior when emptied of all His Glory and a spectacle of shame upon the brink of death!

How certain is it that He can do great wonders of mercy nowseeing that He has returned unto His Glory and sits upon the Throne of light! He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. If a dying Savior saved the thief, my argument is that He can do even more, now that He lives and reigns. All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earthcan anything at this present time surpass the power of His Grace?

It is not only the weakness of our Lord which makes the salvation of the penitent thief memorable. It is the fact that the dying malefactor saw it before his very eyes. Can you put yourself into his place and suppose yourself to be looking upon one who hangs in agony upon a cross? Could you readily believe Him to be the Lord of Glory who would soon come to

His kingdom? That was no mean faith which, at such a moment, could believe in Jesus as Lord and King. If the Apostle Paul were here and wanted to add a New Testament chapter to the eleventh of Hebrews, he might certainly commence his instances of remarkable faith with this thief.

He believed in a crucified, derided, and dying Christ and cried to Him as to one whose kingdom would surely come. The thiefs faith was the more remarkable because he was, himself, in great pain and bound to die. It is not easy to exercise confidence when you are tortured with deadly anguish. Our own rest of mind has at times been greatly hindered by pain of body. When we are the subjects of acute suffering it is not easy to exhibit that faith which we fancy we possess at other times. This man, suffering as he did and seeing the Savior in so sad a state, nevertheless believed unto life eternal. Herein was such faith as is seldom seen.

Remember also, that he was surrounded by scoffers. It is easy to swim with the current and hard to go against the stream. This man heard the priests, in their pride, ridicule the Lord. The great multitude of the common people, with one consent, joined in the scorningeven his comrade caught the spirit of the hour and also mocked Jesus. And perhaps he did the same for a while. But through the Grace of God he was changed and believed in the Lord Jesus in the teeth of all the scorn. His faith was not affected by his   
surroundings.

But he, dying thief as he was, proclaimed his confidence. Like a jutting rock standing out in the midst of a torrent, he declared the innocence of the Christ whom others blasphemed. His faith is worthy of our imitation in its fruits. He had no member that was free except his tongue, and he used that member wisely to rebuke his brother malefactorand defend his Lord. His faith brought forth a brave testimony and a bold confession.

I am not going to praise the thief or his faithI am going to extol the glory of that Divine Grace which gave the thief such faith and then freely saved him by its means. I am anxious to show how glorious is the Saviorthat Savior to the uttermost, who at such a time could save such a man and give him so great a faith and so perfectly and speedily prepare him for eternal bliss. Behold the power of that Divine Spirit who could produce such faith on soil so unlikely and in a climate so unfavorable.

Let us enter at once into the center of our sermon. Note first the man who was our Lords last companion on earth. Note secondly that this same man was our Lords first companion at the gate of Paradise. And then, thirdly, let us note the sermon which our Lord preaches to us from this act of Divine Grace. Oh, for a blessing from the Holy Spirit all the sermon through!

I. Carefully NOTE THAT THE CRUCIFIED THIEF WAS OUR LORDS LAST COMPANION ON EARTH. What sorry company our Lord selected when He was here. He did not consort with the religious Pharisees or the philosophic SadduceesHe was known as the friend of publicans and sinners. How I rejoice at this! It gives me assurance that He will not refuse to associate with me. When the Lord Jesus made a friend of me He certainly did not make a choice which brought Him credit. Do you think He gained any honor when He made a friend of you? Has He ever gained anything by befriending us?

No, my Brethren. If Jesus had not stooped very low He would not have come to me. And if He did not seek the most unworthy He might not have come to you. You feel it so and you are thankful that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. As the great Physician, our Lord was much with the sickHe went where there was room for Him to exercise His healing art. The whole have no need of a Physicianthey cannot appreciate Himand therefore He did not frequent their abodes. But after all, our Lord did make a good choice when He saved you and me. For in us He has found abundant room for His mercy and Grace. There has been plenty of elbow room for His love to work within the awful emptiness of our necessities and sins. And therein He has done great things for us, and we are glad.

Lest any here should be despairing and say, He will never look on me, I want you to notice that the last companion of Christ on earth was a sinner and no ordinary sinner. He had broken even the laws of man, for he was a robber. One calls him a brigand, and I suppose it is likely to have been the case. The brigands of those days mixed murder with their robberieshe was probably a freebooter in arms against the Roman governmentmaking this a pretext for plundering as he had opportunity. At last he was arrested and was condemned by a Roman tribunal, which, on the whole, was usually just, and in this case was certainly just.

He himself confessed the justice of his condemnation. The malefactor who believed upon the cross was a convict who had lain in the condemned cell and was then undergoing execution for his crimes. A convicted felon was the person with whom our Lord last consorted upon earth. What a lover of the souls of guilty men is Jesus! How He stoops to the very lowest of mankind! To this most unworthy of men the Lord of Glory, before He gave up His life, spoke with matchless grace! He spoke to him such wondrous words as never can be excelled if you search the Scriptures throughToday shall you be with Me in Paradise!

I do not suppose that anywhere in this Tabernacle there will be found a man who has been convicted before the Law or who is even chargeable with a crime against common honesty. But if there should be such a person among my hearers, I would invite him to find pardon and change of heart though our Lord Jesus Christ. You may come to Him whoever you may be. For this man did. Here is a specimen of one who had gone to the extremes of guilt and who acknowledged that he had done so. He made no excuse and sought no cloak for his sin. He was in the hands of justice, confronted with executionand yet he believed in Jesus and breathed a humble prayer to Himand he was saved upon the spot!

As is the sample, such is the bulk. Jesus saves others of like kind. Let me, therefore, put it very plainly here so that no one may misunderstand menone of you are excluded from the infinite mercy of Christ! However great your iniquityif you believe in Jesus, He will save you.

This man was not only a sinner, he was a sinner newly awakened. I do not suppose that he had seriously thought of the Lord Jesus before. According to the other Evangelists he appears to have joined with his fellow thief in scoffing at Jesus. If he did not actually himself use opprobrious words he was so far consenting that the Evangelist did him no injustice when he said, The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. But, now, suddenly, he wakes up to the conviction that the Man who is dying at his side is something more than a man. He reads the title over His head and believes it to be trueThis is Jesus the King of the Jews.

Thus believing, he makes his appeal to the Messiah, whom he had so newly found, and commits himself to His hands. My Hearer, do you see this Truth of Godthat the moment a man knows Jesus to be the Christ of God he may at once put his trust in Him and be saved? A certain preacher, whose Gospel was very doubtful, said, Do you, who have been living in sin for fifty years believe that you can in a moment be made clean through the blood of Jesus? I answer, Yes, we do believe that in one moment, through the precious blood of Jesus, the blackest soul can be made white. We believe that in a single instant the sins of sixty or seventy years can be absolutely forgiven and that the old nature which has gone on growing worse and worse can receive its death wound and eternal life may be implanted in the soul at once.

It was so with this man. He had reached the end of his tether, but all of a sudden he woke up to the assured conviction that the Messiah was at his sideand believinghe looked to Him and lived. So now, my Brothers and Sisters, if you have never in your life before been the subject of any religious convictionif you have lived up till now an utterly ungodly life if now you will believe that Gods dear Son has come into the world to save men from sin and will sincerely confess your sin and trust in Himyou shall be immediately saved. Yes, while I speak the word, the deed of Divine Grace may be accomplished by that glorious One who has gone up into Heaven with omnipotent power to save.

I desire to put this case very plainlythis man who was the last companion of Christ upon earth was a sinner in misery. His sins had found him outhe was now enduring the reward of his deeds. I constantly meet with persons in this conditionthey have lived a life of wantonness, excess and carelessness and they begin to feel the fire-flakes of the tempest of wrath falling upon their flesh. They dwell in an earthly Hella prelude of eternal woe. Remorse, like an asp, has stung them and set their blood on firethey cannot rest, they are troubled day and night. Be sure your sin will find you out. It has found them out and arrested them and they feel the strong grip of conviction.

This man was in that horrible conditionwhat is more, he was in the absolutely extreme. He could not live longthe crucifixion was sure to be fatal. In a short time his legs would be broken to end his wretched existence. He, poor soul, had but a short time to liveonly the space between noon and sundown. But it was long enough for the Savior, who is mighty to save. Some are very much afraid that people will put off coming to Christ if we state this. I cannot help what wicked men do with the Truth of God but I shall state it all the same. If you are now within an hour of death, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. If you never reach your homes again but drop dead on the road, if you will now believe in the Lord Jesus you shall be savedsaved nowon the spot.

Looking and trusting to Jesus, He will give you a new heart and a right spirit and blot out your sins. This is the glory of Christs Grace. How I wish I could extol it in proper language! He was last seen on earth before His death in company with a convicted felon to whom He spoke most lovingly. Come, O you guilty and He will receive you graciously!

Once more, this thief whom Christ saved at last was a man who could do no good works. If salvation had been by good works he could not have been saved. For he was fastened hand and foot to the tree of doom. It was all over with him as to any act or deed of righteousness. He could say a good word or two but that was all. He could perform no acts. And if his salvation had depended on an active life of usefulness, certainly he never could have been saved. He was also a sinner who could not exhibit a longenduring repentance for sin for he had so short a time to live. He could not have experienced bitter convictions lasting over months and years, for his time was measured by moments and he was on the borders of the grave.

His end was very near, and yet the Savior could save him and did save him so perfectly that the sun went not down till he was in Paradise with Christ! This sinner, whom I have painted to you in colors none too black, was one who believed in Jesus and confessed his faith. He did trust the Lord. Jesus was a man and he called Him so. But he knew that He was also Lord and he called Him so and said, Lord, remember me. He had such confidence in Jesus that he knew if He would but only think of him, if Jesus would only remember him when He came into His kingdom, that would be all that he would ask of Him.

Alas, my dear Hearers! The trouble with some of you is that you know all about my Lord and yet you do not trust Him. Trust is the saving act. Years ago you were on the verge of really trusting Jesus but you are just as far off from it now as you were then. This man did not hesitatehe grasped the one hope for himself. He did not keep his persuasion of our Lords Messiahship in his mind as a dry, dead belief. No, he turned it into trust and prayer, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. Oh, that in His infinite mercy many of you would trust my Lord this morning! You shall be saved, I am sure you shallif you are not saved when you trustI must myself also renounce all hope.

This is all that we have donewe looked and we lived and we continue to live because we look to the living Savior. Oh, that this morning, feeling your sin, you would look to Jesus, trust Him and confess that trust! Owning that He is Lord to the Glory of God the Father, you must and shall be saved! In consequence of having this faith which saved him, this poor

man breathed the humble, but fitting prayer, Lord, remember me. This does not seem too much to ask. But as he understood it, it meant all that an anxious heart could desire. As he thought of the kingdom he had such clear ideas of the glory of the Savior that he felt that if the Lord would think of him, his eternal state would be safe.

Joseph, in prison, asked the chief butler to remember him when he was restored to power. But he forgot him. Our Joseph never forgets a sinner who cried to Him in the low dungeon. In His kingdom He remembers the moans and groans of poor sinners who are burdened with a sense of sin. Can you not pray this morning and thus secure a place in the memory of the Lord Jesus?

Thus I have tried to describe the thief. And after having done my best I shall fail of my objective unless I make you see that whatever this thief washe is a picture of what you are. Especially if you have been a great offender and if you have been living long without caring for eternal things! And yet you, even you, may do as that thief did. You may believe that Jesus is the Christ and commit your souls into His hands and He will save you as surely as He saved the condemned brigand. Jesus graciously says, Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. This means that if you come and trust Him, whoever you may be, He will for no reason and on no ground and under no circumstances ever cast you out. Do you catch that thought? Do you feel that it belongs to you and that if you come to Him you shall find eternal life? I rejoice if you so far perceive the Truth.

Few persons have so much contact with desponding and despairing souls as I have. Poor, cast down ones, write to me continually. I scarcely know why. I have no especial gift of consolation but I gladly lay myself out to comfort the distressed and they seem to know it. What joy I have when I see a despairing one find peace! I have had this joy several times during the week just ended. How much I desire that any of you who are breaking your hearts because you cannot find forgiveness, would come to my Lord and trust Him and enter into rest! Has He not said, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest? Come and try Him and that rest shall be yours.

II. In the second place, NOTE THAT THIS MAN WAS OUR LORDS COMPANION AT THE GATE OF PARADISE. I am not going into any speculations as to where our Lord went when He quit the Body which hung on the Cross. It would seem from some Scriptures that He descended into the lower parts of the earththat He might fulfill all things. But He very rapidly traversed the regions of the dead. Remember that He died perhaps an hour or two before the thief and during that time the eternal glory flamed through the underworld and was flashing through the gates of Paradise just when the pardoned thief was entering the eternal world.

Who is this that enters the pearly gate at the same moment as the King of Glory? Who is this favored companion of the Redeemer? Is it some honored martyr? Is it a faithful Apostle? Is it a Patriarch like Abraham? Or a prince like David? It is none of these. Behold and be amazed at Sovereign Grace! He that goes in at the gate of Paradise with the King of Glory is a thief who was saved in the article of death. He is saved in no inferior way and received into bliss in no secondary style. Verily there are last which shall be first!

Here I would have you notice the condescension of our Lords choice. The comrade of the Lord of Glory for whom the cherub turns aside his sword of fire is no great one, but a newly-converted malefactor. And why? I think the Savior took him with Him as a specimen of what He meant to do. He seemed to say to all the heavenly powers, I bring a sinner with Me. He is a sample of the rest. Have you ever heard of him who dreamed that he stood without the gate of Heaven and while there he heard sweet music from a band of venerable persons who were on their way to G

Enquiring What are these? he was told that they were the goodly fellowship of the Prophets. He sighed and said, Alas, I am not one of those. He waited a while and another band of shining ones drew near, who also entered Heaven with hallelujahs and when he enquired, Who are these and from where they came? the answer was, These are the glorious company of the Apostles. Again he sighed and said, I cannot enter with them. Then came another body of men, white-robed and bearing palms in their hands who marched amid great acclamation into the golden city. These he learned were the noble army of martyrs. And again he wept and said, I cannot enter with these.

In the end he heard the voices of much people and saw a greater multitude advancing among whom he perceived Rahab and Mary Magdalene, David and Peter, Manasseh and Saul of Tarsus and he espied especially the thief who died at the right hand of Jesus. These all entered in a strange company. Then he eagerly enquired, Who are these? and they answered, This is the host of sinners saved by Divine Grace. Then was he exceeding glad and said, I can go in with these. But he thought there would be no shouting at the approach of this company and that they would enter Heaven without song. Instead of which, there seemed to rise a seven-fold hallelujah of praise unto the Lord of Love. For there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over sinners that repent.

I invite any poor soul here that can neither aspire to serve Christ, nor to suffer for Him as yet, nevertheless to come in with other believing sinnersin the company of Jesus who now sets before us an open door. While we are handling this text, note well the blessedness of the place to which the Lord called this penitent. Jesus said, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Paradise means a gardena garden filled with delights. The garden of Eden is the type of Heaven. We know that Paradise means Heaven, for the Apostle speaks of such a man caught up into Paradise and he calls it the third Heaven. Our Savior took this dying thief into the Paradise of infinite delight, and this is where He will take all of us sinners who believe in Him. If we are trusting Him, we shall ultimately be with Him in Paradise.

The next word is better still. Note the glory of the society to which this sinner is introducedToday shall you be with Me in Paradise. If the

Lord said, Today shall you be with Me, we should not need Him to add another word. Where He is, is Heaven to us. He added the word, Paradise, because otherwise none could have guessed where He was going. Think of it, you uncomely soul. You are to dwell with the Altogether Lovely One forever! You poor and needy onesyou are to be with Him in His Glory, in His bliss, in His perfection. Where He is and as He is, you shall be. The Lord looks into those weeping eyes of yours this morning and He says, Poor Sinner, you shall one day be with Me. I think I hear you say, Lord, that is bliss too great for such a sinner as I am. But He repliesI have loved you with an everlasting lovetherefore with loving kindness will I draw you, till you shall be with Me where I am.

The stress of the text lies in the speediness of all this. Verily I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Today. You shall not lie in purgatory for ages, nor sleep in limbo for so many years. But you shall be ready for bliss at once and at once, you shall enjoy it. The sinner was hard by the gates of Hell but almighty mercy lifted him up and the Lord said, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. What a change from the Cross to the crown, from the anguish of Calvary to the glory of the New Jerusalem!

In those few hours the beggar was lifted from the dunghill and set among princes. Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Can you measure the change from that sinnerloathsome in his iniquity when the sun was at high noonto that same sinner clothed in pure white and accepted in the Beloved, in the Paradise of God, when the sun went down? O glorious Savior, what marvels You can work! How rapidly can You work them!

Please notice, also, the majesty of the Lords Grace in this text. The Savior said to him, Verily I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Our Lord gives His own will as the reason for saving this man. I say. He says it, who claims the right thus to speak. It is He who will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. He speaks royally, Verily I say unto you. Are they not imperial words? The Lord is a King in whose Word there is power. What He says none can deny. He that has the keys of Hell and of death says, I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Who shall prevent the fulfillment of His Word?

Notice the certainty of it. He says, Verily. Our blessed Lord on the Cross returned to His old majestic manner as He painfully turned His head and looked on His convert. He was likely to begin His preaching with, Verily, verily, I say unto you. And now that He is dying He uses His favorite manner and says, Verily. Our Lord took no oathHis strongest asseveration was, Verily, verily. To give the penitent the most plain assurance, He says, Verily I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. In this the thief had an absolutely indisputable assurance that though he must die, yet he would live and find himself in Paradise with his Lord.

I have thus shown you that our Lord passed within the pearly gate in company with one to whom He had pledged Himself. Why should not you and I pass through that pearly gate in due time, clothed in His merit, washed in His blood and resting on His power? One of these days angels will say of you and of me, Who is this that comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved? The shining ones will be amazed to see some of us coming. If you have lived a life of sin until now, and yet shall repent and enter Heavenwhat an amazement there will be in every golden street to think that you have come there! In the early Christian Church, Marcus Caius Victorinus was converted. But he had reached so great an age and had been so gross a sinner that the pastor and Church doubted him.

He gave, however, clear proof of having undergone the Divine change, and then there were great acclamations and many shouts of, Victorinus has become a Christian! Oh, that some of you big sinners might be saved! How gladly would we rejoice over you! Why not? Would it not glorify God? The salvation of this convicted highwayman has made our Lord illustrious for mercy even unto this daywould not your case do the same? Would not saints cry, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! if they heard that some of you had been turned from darkness to marvelous light? Why should it not be? Believe in Jesus and it is so.

III. Now I come to my third and most practical pointNOTE THE LORDS SERMON TO US FROM ALL THIS.

The devil wants to preach this morning a bit. Yes, Satan asks to come to the front and preach to you. But he cannot be allowed. Out of here, you deceiver! Yet I should not wonder if he gets at some of you when the sermon is over and whispers, You see, you can be saved at the very last. Put off repentance and faith. You may be forgiven on your deathbed. Sirs, you know who it is that would ruin you by this suggestion. Abhor his deceitful teaching! Do not be ungrateful because God is kind. Do not provoke the Lord because He is patient.

Such conduct would be unworthy and ungrateful. Do not run an awful risk because one escaped the tremendous peril. The Lord will accept all who repent. But how do you know that you will repent? It is true that one thief was savedbut the other thief was lost. One is saved and we may not despair. The other is lost and we may not presume. Dear Friends, I trust you are not made of such diabolical stuff as to fetch from the mercy of God an argument for continuing in sin. If you do, I can only say of you, that your damnation will be just. You will have brought it upon yourselves.

Consider now the teaching of our Lordsee the glory of Christ in salvation. He is ready to save at the last moment. He was just passing away His foot was on the doorstep of the Fathers house. Up comes this poor sinner, the last thing at nightat the eleventh hourand the Savior smiles and declares that He Himself will not enter except with this belated wanderer. At the very gate He declares that this seeking soul shall enter with Him. There was plenty of time for him to have come beforeyou know how apt we are to say, You have waited to the last moment. I am just going off, and I cannot attend to you now. Our Lord had His dying pangs upon Him and yet He attends to the perishing criminal and permits him to pass through the heavenly portal in His company.

Jesus easily saves the sinners for whom He painfully died. Jesus loves to rescue sinners from going down into the pit. You will be very happy if you are saved but you will not be one half so happy as He will be when He saves you. See how gentle He is

*His hand no thunder bears,   
No terror clothes His brow;   
No bolts to drive our guilty souls   
To fiercer flames below.*

He comes to us full of tenderness with tears in His eyes, mercy in His hands and love in His heart. Believe Him to be a great Savior of great sinners. I have heard of one who had received great mercy who went about saying, He is a great forgiver. And I would have you say the same. You shall find your transgressions put away and your sins pardoned once and for all if you trust Him now.

The next doctrine Christ preaches from this wonderful story is faith in its permitted attachment. This man believed that Jesus was the Christ. The next thing he did was to appropriate that Christ. He said, Lord, remember me. Jesus might have said, What have I to do with you and what have you to do with Me? What has a thief to do with the perfect One? Many of you good people try to get as far away as you can from the erring and fallen. They might infect your innocence! Society claims that we should not be familiar with people who have offended against its laws. We must not be seen associating with them, for it might discredit us. Infamous bosh!

Can anything discredit sinners such as we are by nature and by practice? If we know ourselves before God, are we not degraded enough in and of ourselves? Is there anybody, after all, who is worse than we are when we see ourselves in the faithful glass of the Word? As soon as ever a man believes that Jesus is the Christ, let him hook himself on to Him. The moment you believe Jesus to be the Savior, seize upon Him as your Savior. If I remember rightly, Augustine called this man, Latro laudabilis et mirabilis, a thief to be praised and wondered atwho dared, as it were to seize the Savior for his own.

In this he is to be imitated. Take the Lord to be yours and you have Him. Jesus is the common property of all sinners who are bold enough to take Him. Every sinner who has the will to do so may take the Lord home with Him. He came into the world to save the sinful. Take Him by force as robbers take their prey. The kingdom of Heaven suffers the violence of daring faith. Get Him and He will never get Himself away from you. If you trust Him, He must save you.

Next, notice the doctrine of faith in its immediate power *The moment a sinner believes,   
And trusts in his crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives,   
Redemption in full through His blood.*

Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. He has no sooner believed than Christ gives him the seal of his believing in the full assurance that he shall be with Him forever in His Glory. O dear Hearts, if you believe this morning, you shall be saved this morning! God grant that you, by His rich Grace, may be brought into salvation here on the spot and at once!

The next thing is the nearness of eternal things. Think of that a minute. Heaven and Hell are not places far away. You may be in Heaven before the clock ticks again. Could we but rend that veil which parts us from the unseen! It is all there and all near. Today, said the Lord. Within three or four hours at the longest, shall you be with Me in Paradise. It is so near! A statesman has given us the expression of being within measurable distance. We are all within measurable distance of Heaven or Hell. If there is any difficulty in measuring the distance, it lies in its brevity rather than in its length

*One gentle sigh the fetter breaks,   
We scarce can say, Hes gone,   
Before the ransomed spirit takes   
Its mansion near the Throne.*

Oh, that we, instead of trifling about such things because they seem so far away, would solemnly realize themsince they are really so very near! This very day, before the sun goes down, some Hearer now sitting in this place may see in his own spirit the realities of Heaven or Hell. It has frequently happened in this large congregationsomeone in our audience has died before the next Sabbath has come roundit may happen this week. Think of that, and let eternal things impress you all the more because they lie so near.

Furthermore, know that if you have believed in Jesus you are prepared for Heaven. It may be that you will have to live on earth twenty, or thirty, or forty years to glorify Christ. And if so, be thankful for the privilege. But if you do not live another hour, your instantaneous death would not alter the fact that he that believes in the Son of God is meet for Heaven. Surely, if anything beyond faith is needed to make us fit to enter Paradise, the thief would have been kept a little longer here. But no, he is in the morning in the state of natureat noon he enters the state of Divine Grace and by sunset he is in the state of Glory!

The question never is, whether a deathbed repentance is accepted if it is sincerethe question isis it sincere? If it isif the man dies five minutes after his first act of faithhe is as safe as if he had served the Lord for fifty years. If your faith is true, if you die one moment after you have believed in Christ you will be admitted into Paradiseeven if you shall have enjoyed no time in which to produce good works and other evidences of Divine Grace. He that reads the heart will read your faith written on its fleshy tablets and He will accept you through Jesus Christeven though no act of Divine Grace has been visible to the eye of man.

I conclude by again saying that this is not an exceptional case. I began with that and I want to finish with it. So many demi-semi-gospelers are so terribly afraid of preaching Free Grace too fully. I read somewhere and I think it is true, that some ministers preach the Gospel in the same way

as donkeys eat thistlesnamely, very, very cautiously. On the contrary, I will preach it boldly. I have not the slightest alarm about the matter. If any of you misuse Free Grace teaching, I cannot help it. He that will be damned can as well ruin himself by perverting the Gospel as by anything else. I cannot help what base hearts may invent.

But mine it is to set forth the Gospel in all its fullness of grace and I will do it. If the thief was an exceptional caseand our Lord does not usually act in such a waythere would have been a hint given of so important a fact. A hedge would have been set about this exception to all rules. Would not the Savior have whispered quietly to the dying man, You are the only one I am going to treat in this way? Whenever I have to do an exceptional favor to a person I have to say, Do not mention this, or I shall have so many besieging me.

If the Savior had meant this to be a solitary case, He would have faintly said to him, Do not let anybody know. But you shall today be in the kingdom with Me. No! Our Lord spoke openly and those about Him heard what He said. Moreover, the inspired penman has recorded it. If it had been an exceptional case it would not have been written in the Word of God. Men will not publish their actions in the newspapers if they feel that the record might lead others to expect from them what they cannot give. The Savior had this wonder of Divine Grace reported in the daily news of the Gospel because He means to repeat the marvel every day.

The bulk shall be equal to the sample, and therefore He sets the sample before you all. He is able to save to the uttermostfor He saved the dying thief. The case would not have been put there to encourage hopes which He cannot fulfill. Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning and not for our disappointing. I pray you, therefore, if any of you have not yet trusted in my Lord Jesus come and trust in Him now. Trust Him wholly. Trust Him only. Trust Him at once. Then will you sing with me

*The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day,   
And there have I, though vile as he, Washed all my sins away.*

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OUR LORDS LAST CRY FROM THE CROSS   
NO. 2311

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JUNE 4, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITATN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JUNE 9, 1889.

**And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said this, He gave up the ghost. Luke 23:46.**

THESE were the dying words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. It may be instructive if I remind you that the Words of Christ upon the Cross were seven. Calling each of His cries, or utterances, by the title of a Word, we speak of the seven last Words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me rehearse them in your hearing. The first, when they nailed Him to the Cross, was, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke has preserved that Word. Later, when one of the two thieves said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom, Jesus said to him, Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. This, also, Luke has carefully preserved. Farther on, our Lord, in His great agony, saw His mother, with breaking heart, standing by the Cross and looking up to Him with unutterable love and grief, and He said to her, Woman, behold. your son! and to the beloved Apostle, Behold your mother! and thus He provided a home for her when He, Himself, should be gone away. This utterance has only been preserved by John.

The fourth and central Word of the seven was, Eloi, Eloi, Lama, Sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? This was the culmination of His grief, the central point of all His agony. That most awful word that ever fell from the lips of man, expressing the quintessence of exceeding agony, is well put fourth, as though it had need of three words before it, and three words after it, as its bodyguard. It tells of a good Man, a son of God, the Son of God, forsaken of His God! That central Word of the seven is found in Matthew and in Mark, but not in Luke or John.

But the fifth Word has been preserved by John, that is, I thirst, the shortest, but not quite the sharpest of all the Masters Words, though under a bodily aspect, perhaps the sharpest of them all. John has also treasured up another very precious saying of Jesus Christ on the Cross, that is the wondrous Word, It is finished. This was the last word but one, It is finished, the gathering up of all His lifework, for He had loft nothing undone, no thread was left raveling, the whole fabric of Redemption had been woven, like His garment, from the top throughout, and it was finished to perfection! After He had said, It is finished, He uttered the last Word of all, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit, which I have taken for a text, tonight, but to which I will not come immediately.

There has been a great deal said about these seven cries from the Cross by many writers and though I have read what many of them have written, I cannot add anything to what they have said, since they have delighted to dwell upon these seven last cries, and here the most ancient writers, of what would be called the Romish school, are not to be excelled, even by Protestants, in their intense devotion to every letter of our Saviors dying Words. And they sometimes strike out new meanings, richer and more rare than any that have occurred to the far cooler minds of modern critics, who are, as a rule, greatly blessed with moles eyes, able to see where there is nothing to be seen, but never able to see when there is anything worth seeing! Modern criticism, like modern theology, if it were put in the Garden of Eden, would not see a flower. It is like the sirocco that blasts and burns. It is without either dew or unction, in fact, it is the very opposite of these precious things, and proves itself to be unblessed of God and unblessed to men.

Now concerning these seven cries from the Cross, many authors have drawn from them, lessons concerning seven duties. Listen. When our Lord said, Father, forgive them, in effect, He said to us, Forgive your enemies. Even when they despitefully use you and put you to terrible pain, be ready to pardon them! Be like the sandalwood tree which perfumes the axe that fells it. Be all gentleness, kindness and loveand be this your prayer, Father, forgive them.

The next duty is taken from the second cry, namely, that of penitence and faith in Christ, for He said to the dying thief, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Have you, like he, confessed your sin? Have you his faith and his prayerfulness? Then you shall be accepted even as he was! Learn, then, from the second cry, the duty of penitence and faith.

When our Lord, in the third cry, said to His mother, Woman, behold your son! He taught us the duty of filial love. No Christian must ever be short of love to his mother, his father, or to any of those who are endeared to him by relationships which God has appointed for us to observe. Oh, by the dying love of Christ to His mother, let no man here unman himself by forgetting his mother! She bore youbear her in her old age and lovingly cherish her even to the last.

Jesus Christs fourth cry teaches us the duty of clinging to God and trusting in GodMy God, my God. See how, with both hands, He takes hold of HimMy God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? He cannot bear to be left of God. All else causes Him but little pain compared with the anguish of being forsaken of His God. So learn to cling to God, to grip Him with a double-handed faith, and if you do ever think that He has forsaken you, cry after Him, and say, Show me why You contend with me, for I cannot bear to be without You.   
The fifth cry, I thirst, teaches us to set a high value upon the fulfillment of Gods Word. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. Take good heed, in all your grief and weakness, to still preserve the Word of your God, and to obey the precept. Learn the doctrine and delight in the promise. As your Lord, in His great anguish said, I thirst, because it was written that so He would speak, have regard unto the Word of the Lord even in little things!

That sixth cry, It is finished, teaches us perfect obedience. Go through with your keeping of Gods Commandments. Leave out no Command, keep on obeying till you can say, It is finished. Work your lifework, obey your Master, suffer or serve according to His will, but rest not till you can say with your Lord, It is finished. I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.

And that last Word, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit, teaches us resignation. Yield all things. Yield up even your spirit to God at His bidding. Stand still and make a full surrender to the Lord, and let this be your watchword from the first even to the last, Into Your hands, my Father, I commend my spirit. I think that this study of Christs last Words should interest you, therefore let me linger a little longer upon it. Those seven cries from the Cross also teach us something about the attributes and offices of our Master. They are seven windows of agate and gates of carbuncle through which you may see Him and approach Him.

First, would you see Him as Intercessor? Then He cries, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Would you look at Him as King? Then hear His second Word, Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Would you mark Him as a tender Guardian? Hear Him say to Mary, Woman, behold your son! And to John, Behold your mother! Would you peer into the dark abyss of the agonies of His soul? Hear Him cry, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Would you understand the reality and the intensity of His bodily sufferings? Then hear Him say, I thirst, for there is something exquisite in the torture of thirst when brought on by the fever of bleeding wounds. Men on the battlefield who have lost much blood, are devoured with thirst, and tell you that it is the worst pang of all. I thirst, says Jesus. See the Sufferer in the body and understand how He can sympathize with you who suffer, since He suffered so much on the Cross. Would you see Him as the Finisher of your salvation? Then hear His cry, Consummatum estIt is finished. Oh, glorious note! Here you see the blessed Finisher of your faith! And would you then take one more gaze and understand how voluntary was His suffering? Then hear Him say, not as one who is robbed of life, but as one who takes His soul and hands it over to the keeping of another, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.

Is there not much to be learned from these cries from the Cross? Surely these seven notes make a wondrous scale of music if we do but know how to listen to them! Let me run up the scale, again. Here, first, you have Christs fellowship with menFather, forgive them. He stands side by side with sinners and tries to make an apology for themThey know not what they do. Here is, next, His kingly power. He sets open Heavens gate to the dying thief and bids him enter. Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Thirdly, behold His human relationship. How near of kin He is to us! Woman, behold your son! Remember how He says, Whoever shall do the will of My Father who is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother. He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He belongs to the Human family. He is more of a Man than any man! As surely as He is very God of very God, He is also very Man of very man, taking into Himself the Nature, not of the Jew only, but of the Gentile, too. Belonging to His own nationality, but rising above all, He is the Man of men, the Son of Man.

See, next, His taking our sin. You say, Which note is that Well, they are all to that effect, but this one, chiefly, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? It was because He bore our sins in His own body on the tree that He was forsaken of God. He has made Him to be sin for us. who knew no sin, and hence the bitter cry, Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani? Behold Him, in that fifth cry, I thirst, taking not only our sin, but also our infirmityand all the suffering of our bodily nature. Then, if you would see His fullness as well as His weakness, if you would see His AllSufficiency as well as His sorrow, hear Him cry, It is finished. What a wonderful fullness there is in that note! Redemption is all accomplished! It is all complete! It is all perfect! There is nothing left, not a drop of bitterness in the cup of gallJesus has drained it dry! There is not a farthing to be added to the ransom priceJesus has paid it all! Behold His fullness in the cry, It is finished. And then, if you would see how He has reconciled us to Himself, behold Him, the Man who was made a curse for us, returning with a blessing to His Father and taking us with Him, as He draws us all up by that last dear word, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.

*Now both the Surety and sinner are free.* Christ goes back to the Father, for, It is finished, and you and I come to the Father through His perfect work!

I have only practiced two or three tunes that can be played upon this harp, but it is a wonderful instrument. If it is not a harp of ten strings, it is, at any rate, an instrument of seven strings, and neither time nor eternity shall ever be able to fetch all the music out of them! Those seven dying words of the ever-living Christ will make melody for us in Glory through all the ages of eternity.

I shall now ask your attention for a little time to the text itselfFather, into Your hands I commend My spirit.   
Do you see our Lord? He is dying and, as yet, His face is toward man. His last Word to man is the cry, It is finished. Hear, all you sons of men, He speaks to you, It is finished. Could you have a choicer Word with which He should say, Adieu, to you in the hour of death? He tells you not to fear that His work is imperfect, not to tremble lest it should prove insufficient. He speaks to you and declares with His dying utterance, It is finished. Now He has done with you and He turns His face the other way. His days work is done, His more than Herculean toil is accomplished, and the great Champion is going back to His Fathers Throneand He speaksbut not to you. His last Word is addressed to His Father, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. These are His first Words in going Home to His Father, as, It is finished, is His last Word as, for a while, He quits our company. Think of these words and may they be your first words, too, when you return to your Father! May you speak thus to your Divine Father in the hour of death!   
The words were much hackneyed in Romish times, but they are not spoilt even for that. They used to be said in the Latin by dying men, In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum. Every dying man used to try to say those words in Latin and if he did not, somebody tried to say them for him. They were made into a kind of spell of witchcraftand so they lost that sweetness to our ears in the Latinbut in the English they shall always stand as the very essence of music for a dying saint, Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.

It is very noteworthy that the last Words that our Lord used were quoted from the Scriptures. This sentence is taken, as I daresay most of you know, from the 31st Psalm, and the fifth verse. Let me read it to you. What a proof it is of how full Christ was of the Bible! He was not one of those who think little of the Word of God. He was saturated with it. He was as full of Scripture as the fleece of Gideon was full of dew. He could not speak, even in His death, without uttering Scripture. This is how David put it, Into your hand I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth. Now, Beloved, the Savior altered this passage, or else it would not quite have suited Him. Do you see, first, He was obliged, in order to fit it to His own case, to add something to it? What did He add to it? Why, that word, Father! David said, Into Your hand I commit my spirit, but Jesus said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. Blessed advance! He knew more than David did, for He was more the Son of God than David could be. He was the Son of God in a very high and special sense by eternal filiation and so He begins the prayer with, Father.   
But then He takes something away from it. It was necessary that He should do so, for David said, Into Your hand I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me. Our blessed Master was not redeemed, for He was the Redeemer, and He could have said, Into Your hand I commit My spirit, for I have redeemed My people. But that He did not choose to say. He simply took that part which suited Himself and used it as His own, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, you will not do better, after all, than to quote Scripture, especially in prayer! There are no prayers so good as those that are full of the Word of God! May all our speech be flavored with texts! I wish that it were more so. They laughed at our Puritan forefathers because the very names of their children were fetched out of passages of Scripture, but I, for my part, had much rather be laughed at for talking much of Scripture than for talking much of trashy novelsnovels with which (I am ashamed to say it) many a sermon nowadays is larded, yes, larded with novels that are not fit for decent men to read and which are coated over till one hardly knows whether he is hearing about a historical event, or only a piece of fiction from which abomination, good Lord, deliver us!   
So, then, you see how well the Savior used Scripture, and how, from His first battle with the devil in the wilderness till His last struggle with death on the Cross, His weapon was always, It is written. FATHERHOOD OF GOD   
Now, I am coming to the text, itself, and I am going to preach from it for only a very short time. In doing so, firstly, let us learn the doctrine of this last cry from the Cross. Secondly, let us practice the duty. And thirdly, let us enjoy the privilege.  
I. First, LET US LEARN THE DOCTRINE of our Lords last cry from the Cross.   
What is the Doctrine of this last Word of our Lord Jesus Christ? God is His Father and God is our Father. He who, Himself, said, Father, did not say for Himself, Our Father, for the Father is Christs Father in a higher sense than He is ours. But yet He is not more truly the Father of Christ than He is our Father if we have believed in Jesus! You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God, and your God. Believe the Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God to His people! As I have warned you before, abhor the doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God, for it is a lie and a deep deception! It stabs at the heart, first, of the Doctrine of the Adoption which is taught in Scripture, for how can God adopt men if they are already all His children? In the second place, it stabs at the heart of the Doctrine of Regeneration, which is certainly taught in the Word of God. Now it is by regeneration and faith that we become the children of God, but how can that be if we are already the children of God? As many as received Him, 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. How can God give to men the power to become His sons if they have it already? Believe not that lie of the devil, but believe this Truth of God, that Christ and all who are, by living faith in Christ, may rejoice in the Fatherhood of God!   
Next learn this Doctrine, that in this fact lies our chief comfort. In our hour of trouble, in our time of warfare, let us say, Father. You notice that the first cry from the Cross is like the lastthe highest note is like the lowest. Jesus begins with, Father, forgive them, and He finishes with, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. To help you in a stern duty like forgiveness, cry, Father. To help you in sore suffering and death, cry, Father. Your main strength lies in your truly being a child of God!   
Learn the next Doctrine, that dying is going Home to our Father. I said to an old friend, not long ago, Old Mr. So-and-so has gone Home. I meant that He was dead. He said, Yes, where else would he go? I thought that was a wise question. Where else would we go? When we grow gray, and our days work is done, where should we go but home? So, when Christ has said, It is finished, His next Word, of course, is, Father. He has finished His earthly course and now He will go Home to Heaven. Just as a child runs to its mothers bosom when it is tired and wants to fall asleep, so Christ says, Father, before He falls asleep in death.   
Learn another Doctrine, that if God is our Father, and we regard ourselves as going Home when we die, because we go to Him, then He will receive us. There is no hint that we can commit our spirit to God and yet that God will not have us. Remember how Stephen, beneath a shower of stones, cried, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit? Let us, however we may die, make this our last emotion if not our last expression, Father, receive my spirit. Shall not our heavenly Father receive His children? If you, being evil, receive your children at nightfall, when they come home to sleep, shall not your Father, who is in Heaven, receive you when your days work is done? That is the doctrine we are to learn from this last cry from the Crossthe Fatherhood of God and all that comes of it to Believers.   
II. Secondly, LET US PRACTICE THE DUTY.   
That duty seems to me to be, first, resignation. Whenever anything distresses and alarms you, resign yourself to God. Say, Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit. Sing, with Faber   
*I bow me to Your will, O God,   
And all Your ways adore.   
And every day I live Ill seek   
To please You more and more.*   
Learn, next, the duty of prayer. When you are in the very anguish of pain. When you are surrounded by bitter griefs of mind as well as of body, still pray. Drop not the, Our Father. Let not your cries be addressed to the air. Let not your moans be to your physician, or your nurse, but cry, Father. Does not a child so cry when it has lost its way? If it is in the dark at night, and it starts up in a lone room, does it not cry out, Father! And is not a fathers heart touched by that cry? Is there anybody here who has never cried to God? Is there one here who has never said, Father? Then, my Father, put Your love into their hearts and make them say, tonight, I will arise and go to my Father. You shall truly be known to be the sons of God if that cry is in your heart and on your lips.   
The next duty is the committal of ourselves to God by faith. Give yourselves up to God. Trust yourselves with God. Every morning, when you get up, take yourself and put yourself into Gods custodylock yourself up, as it were, in the box of Divine Protectionand every night, when you have unlocked the box, before you fall asleep, lock it again and give the key into the hand of Him who is able to keep you when the image of death is on your face. Before you sleep, commit yourself to God. I mean, do that when there is nothing to frighten you, when everything is going smoothly, when the wind blows softly from the south and the boat is speeding towards its desired havenstill make not yourself quiet with your own quieting! He who carves for himself will cut his fingers and get an empty plate. He who leaves God to carve for him shall often have fat things full of marrow placed before him. If you can trust, God will reward your trusting in a way that you know not as yet.   
And then practice one other duty, that of the personal and continual realization of Gods Presence. Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. You are here; I know that You are. I realize that You are here in the time of sorrow, and of danger; and I put myself into Your hands. Just as I would give myself to the protection of a policeman, or a soldier, if anyone attacked me, so do I commit myself to You, You unseen Guardian of the night, You unwearied Keeper of the day! You shall cover my head in the day of battle. Beneath Your wings will I trust, as a chick hides beneath the hen.   
See, then, your duty. It is to resign yourself to God, pray to God, commit yourself to God and rest in a sense of the Presence of God. May the Spirit of God help you in the practice of such priceless duties as these!   
III. Now, lastly, LET US ENJOY THE PRIVILEGE.   
First, let us enjoy the high privilege of resting in God in all times of danger and pain. The doctor has just told you that you will have to undergo an operation. Say, Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit. There is every probability that that weakness of yours, or that disease of yours, will increase upon you and that, by-and-by, you will have to take to your bed and lie there, perhaps, for many a day. Then say, Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit. Do not fret, for that will not help you. Do not fear the future, for that will not aid you. Give yourself up (it is your

privilege to do so) to the keeping of those dear hands that were pierced for you, to the love of that dear heart which was set abroach with the spear to purchase your redemption!   
It is wonderful what rest of spirit God can give to a man or a woman in the very worst condition. Oh, how some of the martyrs have sung at the stake! How they have rejoiced when on the rack! Bonners coal-hole, across the water there, at Fulham, where he shut up the martyrs, was a wretched place to lie on a cold winters night, but they said, They did rouse them in the straw, as they lay in the coal-hole, with the sweetest singing out of Heaven! And when Donner said, Fie on them that they should make such a noise! they told him that he, too, would make such a noise if he was as happy as they were. When you have commended your spirit to God, then you have sweet rest in time of danger and pain! The next privilege is that of a brave confidence, in the time of death, or in the fear of death. I was led to think over this text by using it a great many times last Thursday night. Perhaps none of you will ever forget last Thursday night. I do not think that I ever shall, if I live to be as old as Methuselah. From this place till I reached my home, it seemed one continued sheet of fireand the further I went, the more vivid became the lightning flashes. But when I came, at last, to turn up Leigham Court Road, then the lightning seemed to come in very bars from the sky and, at last, as I reached the top of the hill, and a crash came of the most startling kind, down poured a torrent of hailhailstones that I will not attempt to describe, for you might think that I exaggerated! And then I felt, and my friend with me, that we could hardly expect to reach home alive. We were there at the very center and summit of the storm. All around us, on every side, and all within us, as it were, seemed nothing but the electric fluid and Gods right arm seemed bared for war. I felt then, Well, now, I am very likely going Home, and I commended my spirit to God. And from that moment, though I cannot say that I took much pleasure in the peals of thunder, and the flashes of lightning, yet I felt quite as calm as I do here at this present momentperhaps a little more calm than I do in the presence of so many peoplehappy at the thought that, within a single moment, I might understand more than all I could ever learn on earth and see in an instant more than I could hope to see if I lived here for a century! I could only say to my friend, Let us commit ourselves to God. We know that we are doing our duty in going on as we are going, and all is well with us.   
So we could only rejoice together in the prospect of being soon with God. We were not taken Home in the chariot of firewe are still spared a little longer to go on with lifes workbut I realize the sweetness of being able to have done with it all, to have no wish, no will, no word, scarcely a prayer, but just to take ones heart up and hand it over to the great Keeper, saying, Father, take care of me. So let me live, so let me die. I have, henceforth, no desire about anything! Let it be as You please. Into Your hands I commend my spirit.   
This privilege is not only that of having rest in danger, and confidence in the prospect of deathit is also full of consummate joy. Beloved, if we know how to commit ourselves into the hands of God, what a place it is for us to be in! What a place to be inin the hands of God! There are the myriads of stars. There is the universe, itself! Gods hand upholds its everlasting pillars and they do not fall. If we got into the hands of God, we get where all things rest and we get home and happiness! We have got out of the nothingness of the creature into the All-Sufficiency of the Creator. Oh, get you there! Hasten to get there, beloved Friends, and live, henceforth, in the hands of God!   
It is finished. You have not finished, but Christ has. It is all done. What you have to do will only be to work out what He has already finished for you, and show it to the sons of men in your lives. And because it is all finished, therefore say, Now, Father, I return to You. My life, henceforth, shall be to be in You. My joy shall be to shrink to nothing in the Presence of the All-in-All, to die into the eternal life, to sink my ego into Jehovah, to let my manhood, my creature hood live only for its Creator and manifest only the Creators Glory!   
O Beloved, begin tomorrow morning and end tonight with, Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit. The Lord be with you all! Oh, if you have never prayed, God help you to begin to pray now, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON. **LUKE 23:27-49, MATTHEW 27:50-54.**

Luke 23:27. And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. Their best Friend, the Healer of their sick, the Lover of their children, was about to be put to death, so they might well bewail and lament.

28-30. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. Our Savior spoke of the terrible siege of Jerusalem, the most tragic of all human transactions. I think I do not exaggerate when I say that history contains nothing equal to it. It stands alone in the unutterable agony of men, women and children in that dreadful time of suffering.

31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If the Christ of God is put to death even while the Jewish capital seems vigorous and flourishing, what shall be done when it is all dry and dead, and the Roman legions are round about the doomed city?

32. And there were also two other malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. Every item of scorn was added to our Saviors death and yet the Scriptures were thus literally fulfilled, for, He was numbered with the transgressors.

33, 34. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots. Do you bear the hammer fall? Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Do you see the bleeding hands and feet of Jesus? This is all that is extracted by that fearful pressurenothing but words of pardoning love, a prayer for those who are killing HimFather, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

35. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is Christ, the chosen of God. You know how mockery puts salt and vinegar into a wound. A man does not at any time like to be reviled, but when he is full of physical and mental anguish and his heart is heavy within him, then ridicule is peculiarly full of acid to him.

36, 37. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself. These rough soldiers knew how to put their jests in the most cruel shape and to press home their scoffs upon their suffering Victim.

38. And a superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew. These were the three languages that could be understood by all the people round about.

38. THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. And so He is, and so He shall be. He has never quit the throne. The Son of David is still King of the Jews, though they continue to reject Him. But the day shall come when they shall recognize and receive the Messiah. Then shall they look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for His only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for His first-born.

39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If you are Christ, save Yourself and us. Matthew and Mark speak of both the thieves as railing at Jesus. We must take their expressions as being literally correct and, if so, both the malefactors at first cast reproaches in Christs teeth.

40, 41. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Do not you fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man has done nothing amiss. Not only has He done nothing worthy of death, but He has done nothing improper, nothing out of place. This man has done nothing amiss. The thief bears testimony to the perfect Character of this wondrous Man, whom he, nevertheless, recognized to be Divine, as we shall see in the next verse.

42-47. And He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said this, He gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, He glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous Man. He was set there at the head of the guard, to watch the execution, and he could not help saying, as he observed the wonderful signs in Heaven and earth, Certainly this was a righteous Man.

48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. What a change must have come over that ribald crowd! They had shouted, Crucify Him! They had stood there and mocked Him and now they are overcome with the sight, and they strike their breasts. Ah, dear Friends, their grief did not come to much! Men may strike their breasts, but unless

God smites their hearts, all the outward signs of a gracious work will come to nothing at all.

49. And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things. Let these things be before your minds eye this evening and think much of your crucified Lord, all you who are of His acquaintance, and who are numbered among His followers.

(As the Exposition is shorter than usual, an appropriate extract is added from Mr. Spurgeons Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew).

Matthew 27:50. Jesus, when He had cried again with a load voice, yielded up the ghost. Christs strength was not exhausted. His last Word was uttered with a loud voice, like the shout of a conquering warrior! And what a Word it was, It is finished! Thousands of sermons have been preached upon that little sentence, but who can tell all the meaning that lies compacted within it? It is a kind of infinite expression for breadth, depth, length and height altogether immeasurable! Christs life being finished, perfected, completed, He yielded up the ghost, willingly dying, laying down His life as He said He wouldI lay down My life for My sheep. I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

51-53. And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Christs death was the end of Judaism! The veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. As if shocked at the sacrilegious murder of her Lord, the Temple rent her garments, like one stricken with horror at some stupendous crime! The body of Christ being rent, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to bottom. Now was there an entrance made into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus, and a way of access to God was opened for every sinner who trusted in Christs atoning Sacrifice.

See what marvels accompanied and followed the death of Christ! The earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened. Thus did the material world pay homage to Him whom man had rejected, while Natures convulsions foretold what will happen when Christs voice once more shakes not the earth, only, but also Heaven! These first miracles worked in connection with the death of Christ were typical of spiritual wonders that will be continued till He comes againrocky hearts are rent, graves of sin are opened, those who have been dead in trespasses and sins, and buried in sepulchers of lust and evil, are quickened and come out from among the dead, and go unto the holy city, the New Jerusalem!

54. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. These Roman soldiers had never witnessed such scenes in connection with an execution, before, and they could only come to one conclusion about the illustrious Prisoner whom they had put to deathTruly this was the Son of God. It was strange that those men should confess what the chief priests and scribes and elders denied, yet since their day it has often happened that the most abandoned and profane have acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God while their religious rulers have denied His Divinity.

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THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS

NO. 2644

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, OCTOBER 15, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JUNE 25, 1882.

**And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said this, He gave up the ghost. Luke 23:46.**

**Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O LORD God of Truth.   
Psalm 31:5.**

**And they stoned Stephen, as he was calling upon God and asking, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.   
Acts 7:59.**

THIS morning, dear Friends, I spoke upon the first recorded words of  
our Lord Jesus [Sermon #1666, Volume 28The First Recorded Words of Jesus read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org ] when

He said to His mother and to Joseph, How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Fathers business? Now, by the help of the blessed Spirit, we will consider the last words of our Lord Jesus before He gave up the ghost. And with them we will examine two other passages in which similar expressions are used.

The words, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit, if we judge them to be the last which our Savior uttered before His death, ought to be coupled with those other words, It is finished, which some have thought were actually the last He used. I think it was not so, but, anyway, these utterances must have followed each other very quickly and we may blend them together. And then we shall see how very similar they are to His first words as we explained them this morning. There is the cry, It is finished, which you may read in connection with our Authorized VersionDid you not know that I must be about My Fathers business? That business was all finishedHe had been about it all His life and now that He had come to the end of His days, there was nothing left undoneand He could say to His Father, I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.

Then if you take the other utterance of our Lord on the Cross, Father, into your hands I commend My spirit, see how well it agrees with the other reading of our morning text, Did you not know that I must be in My Fathers house? Jesus is putting Himself into the Fathers hands because He had always desired to be there, in the Fathers house with the Father. And now He is committing His spirit, as a sacred trust, into the Fathers hands that He may depart to be with the Father, to abide in His house, and go no more out forever.

Christs life is all of a piece, just as the alpha and the omega are letters of the same alphabet. You do not find Him one thing at the first, another thing afterwards, and a third thing still laterHe is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever. There is a wondrous similarity about everything that Christ said and did. You never need write the name, Jesus, under any of His sayings as you have to put the names of human writers under their sayings, for there is no mistaking any sentence that He has uttered!

If there is anything recorded as having been done by Christ, a believing child can judge whether it is authentic or not. Those miserable false gospels that were brought out did very little, if any mischief, because nobody with any true spiritual discernment was ever duped into believing them to be genuine! It is possible to manufacture a spurious coin which will, for a time, pass for a good one, but it is not possible to make even a passable imitation of what Jesus Christ has said and done! Everything about Christ is like Himselfthere is a Christ-likeness about it which cannot be mistaken! This morning, for instance, when I preached about the Holy Child Jesus, I am sure you must have felt that there was never another child as He was. And in His death He was as unique as in His birth, childhood and life. There was never another who died as He did and there was never another who lived altogether as He did. Our Lord Jesus Christ stands by Himself! Some of us try to imitate Him, but how feebly do we follow in His steps! The Christ of God still stands by Himself and He has no rival!

I have already intimated to you that I am going to have three texts for my sermon, but when I have spoken upon all three of them, you will see that they are so much alike that I might have been content with one of them.

I. I invite you first to consider OUR SAVIORS WORDS JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH. Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.   
Here observe, first, how Christ lives and passes away in the atmosphere of the Word of God. Christ was a grand original thinker and He might always have given us words of His own. He never lacked suitable language, for, never man spoke like this Man. Yet you must have noticed how continually He quoted Scripturethe great majority of His expressions may be traced to the Old Testament. Even where they are not exact quotations, His words drop into Scriptural shape and form! You can see that the Bible has been His one Book. He is evidently familiar with it from the first page to the last and not with its letter, only, but with the innermost soul of its most secret sense and, therefore, when dying, it seemed but natural for Him to use a passage from a Psalm of David as His expiring words. In His death, He was not driven beyond the power of quiet thoughtHe was not unconscious, He did not die of weaknessHe was strong even while He was dying! It is true that He said, I thirst, but, after He had been a little refreshed, He cried with a loud voice, as only a strong man could, It is finished! And now, before He bows His head in the silence of death, He utters His final words, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. Our Lord might, I say again, have made an original speech as His dying declaration. His mind was clear, calm, and undisturbedin fact, He was perfectly happy, for He had said, It is finished! So His sufferings were over and He was already beginning to enjoy a taste of the sweets of victory. Yet, with all that clearness of mind, freshness of intellect and fluency of words that might have been possible to Him, He did not invent a new sentence, but He went to the Book of Psalms and took from the Holy Spirit this expression, Into Your hands I commend My spirit.   
How instructive to us is this great Truth of God that the Incarnate Word lived on the Inspired Word! It was food to Him, as it is to us and, Brothers and Sisters, if Christ thus lived upon the Word of God, should not you and I do the same? He, in some respects, did not need this Book as much as we do. The Spirit of God rested upon Him without measure, yet He loved the Scripture and He went to it, studied it and used its expressions continually. Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God and get that Word into ourselves! As I have seen the silkworm eat into the leaf and consume it, so ought we to do with the Word of the Lordnot crawl over its surface, but eat right into it till we have taken it into our inmost parts! It is idle to merely let the eyes glance over the Words, or to remember the poetical expressions, or the historic factsbut it is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language and your very style is fashioned upon Scripture modelsand, what is still better, your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord!

I would quote John Bunyan as an instance of what I mean. Read anything of his and you will see that it is almost like reading the Bible itself. He had studied our Authorized Version, which will never be bettered, as I judge, till Christ shall come. He had read it till his very soul was saturated with Scripture and though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his Pilgrims Progressthat sweetest of all prose poemswithout continually making us feel and say, Why, this man is a living Bible! Prick him anywherehis blood is Biblinethe very essence of the Bible flows from him! He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God. I commend His example to you, Beloved and, still more, the example of our Lord Jesus! If the Spirit of God is in you, He will make you love the Word of God and, if any of you imagine that the Spirit of God will lead you to dispense with the Bible, you are under the influence of another spirit which is not the Spirit of God at all! I trust that the Holy Spirit will endear to you every page of this Divine Record so that you will feed upon it and, afterwards, speak it out to others. I think it is well worthy of your constant remembrance that, even in death, our blessed Master showed the ruling passion of His spirit so that His last words were a quotation from Scripture.   
Now notice, secondly, that our Lord, in the moment of His death, recognized a personal God. Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. God is to some men an unknown God. There may be a God, so they say, but they get no nearer the truth than that. All things are God, says another. We cannot be sure that there is a God, say others, and, therefore, it is no use our pretending to believe in Him and so to be, possibly, influenced by a supposition. Some people say, Oh, certainly, there is a God, but He is very far off! He does not come near to us and we cannot imagine that He will interfere in our affairs. Ah, but our blessed Lord Jesus Christ believed in no such impersonal, pantheistic, dreamy, far-off God, but in One to whom He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. His language shows that He realized the Personality of God as much as I would recognize the personality of a banker if I said to him, Sir, I commit that money into your hands. I know that I should not say such a thing as that to a mere dummy, or to an abstract something or nothingbut I would say it to a living man and I would say it only to a living man.   
So, Beloved, men do not commit their souls into the keeping of impalpable nothings! They do not, in death, smile as they resign themselves to the infinite unknown, the cloudy Father of everything, who may be nothing or everything. No, no, we only trust what we know! And so Jesus knew the Father, and knew Him to be a real Person having handsand into those hands He commended His departing spirit. I am not now speaking materially, mark you, as though God had hands like ours, but He is an actual Being, who has powers of action, who is able to deal with men as He pleases and who is willing to take possession of their spirits and to protect them forever and ever. Jesus speaks like one who believed that and I pray that, both in life and in death, you and I may always deal with God in the same way. We have far too much fiction in religionand a religion of fiction will bring only fictitious comfort in the dying hour. Come to solid facts! Is God as real to you as you are to yourself? Come now, do you speak with Him, as a man speaks unto his friend? Can you trust Him and rely upon Him as you trust and rely upon the partner of your bosom? If your God is unreal, your religion is unreal! If your God is a dream, your hope will be a dream and woe be unto you when you shall wake up out of it!  
It was not so that Jesus trusted. Father, He said, into Your hands I commend My spirit.   
But, thirdly, here is a still better point. Observe how Jesus Christ here brings out the Fatherhood of God. The Psalm from which He quoted did not say, Father. David did not get as far as that in words, though in spirit he often did. But Jesus had the right to alter the Psalmists words. He can improve on Scripture, though you and I cannot. He did not say, O God, into Your hands I commend My spirit. He said, Father. Oh, that sweet word! That was the gem of our thought, this morning, that Jesus said, Did you not know that I must be at My Fathersthat I must be in My Fathers house! Oh, yes, the Holy Child knew that He was especially and, in a peculiar sense, the Son of the Highest, and therefore He said, My Father. And, in dying, His expiring heart was buoyed up and comforted with the thought that God was His Father. It was because He said that God was His Father that they put Him to death, yet He still stood to it even in His dying hour and said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit!   
What a blessed thing it is for us, also, my Brothers and Sisters, to die conscious that we are children of God! Oh, how sweet, in life and in death, to feel in our soul the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father! In such a case as that   
*It is not death to die.*   
Quoting the Saviors words, It is finished, and relying upon His Father and our Father, we may go even into the jaws of death without the quivering lips of which we sang just now. Joyful, with all the strength we have, our lips may confidently sing, challenging death and the grave to silence our ever-rising and swelling music! O my Father, my Father, if I am in your hands, I may die without fear!  
There is another thought, however, which is perhaps the best one of all. From this passage we learn that our Divine Lord cheerfully rendered up His soul to His Father when the time had come for Him to die. Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit. None of us can, with strict propriety, use these words. When we come to die, we may perhaps utter them and God will accept themthese were the very death-words of Polycarp, Bernard, Luther, Melanchthon, Jerome of Prague, John Huss and an almost endless list of saintsInto Your hands I commend my spirit. The Old Testament rendering of the passage, or else our Lords version of it, has been turned into a Latin prayer and commonly used among Romanists almost as a charmthey have repeated the Latin words when dying, or, if they were unable to do so, the priest repeated the words for them, attaching a sort of magical power to that particular formula! But, in the sense in which our Savior uttered these words, we cannot, any of us, fully use them. We can commit or commend our spirit to God, but yet, Brothers and Sisters, remember that unless the Lord comes first, we must dieand dying is not an act on our part. We have to be passive in the process because it is no longer in our power to retain our life. I suppose that if a man could have such control of his life, it might be questionable when he would surrender it because suicide is a crime and no man can be required to kill himself. God does not demand such action as that at any mans hands and, in a certain sense, that is what would happen whenever a man yielded himself to death.   
But there was no necessity for our blessed Lord and Master to die except the necessity which He had taken upon Himself in becoming the Substitute for His people! There was no necessity for His death even at the last moment upon the Cross, for, as I have reminded you, He cried with a loud voice when natural weakness would have compelled Him to whisper or to sigh. But His life was strong within Himif He had willed to do so, He could have unloosed the nails and come down into the midst of the crowd that stood mocking Him! He died of His own free will, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. A man may righteously surrender his life for the good of his country and for the safety of others. There have frequently been opportunities for men to do this and there have been brave fellows who have worthily done it. But all those men would have had to die at some time or other. They were only slightly anticipating the payment of the debt of nature. But, in our Lords case, He was rendering up to the Father the sprit which He might have kept if He had chosen to do so. No man takes it from Me, He said concerning His life. I lay it down of Myself.   
And there is here a cheerful willingness to yield up His spirit into His Fathers hands! It is rather remarkable that none of the Evangelists describe our Lord as dying. He did die, but they all speak of Him as giving up the ghostsurrendering to God His spirit. You and I passively die, but He actively yielded up His spirit to His Father. In His case, death was an act and He performed that act from the glorious motive of redeeming us from death and Hell! So, in this sense, Christ stands alone in His death.   
But, oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, if we cannot render up our spirit as He did, yet, when our life is taken from us, let us be perfectly ready to give it up! May God bring us into such a state of mind and heart that there shall be no struggling to keep our life, but a sweet willingness to let it be just as God would have ita yielding up of everything into His hands, feeling sure that, in the world of spirits, our soul shall be quite safe in the Fathers hands and that, until the Resurrection Day, the lifegerm of the body will be securely in His keeping, and certain that when the trumpet shall sound, spirit, soul and bodythat trinity of our manhoodshall be reunited in the absolute perfection of our being to behold the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off! When God calls us to die, it will be a sweet way of dying if we can, like our Lord, pass away with a text of Scripture upon our lips, with a personal God ready to receive us, with that God recognized distinctly as our Father and so die joyously, resigning our will entirely to the sweet will of the ever-blessed One, and saying, It is the Lord. My Father. Let Him do as seems good to Him.

II. My second text is in the 31st Psalm, at the 5th verse. And it is evidently the passage which our Savior had in His mind just then Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth. It seems to me that THESE ARE WORDS TO BE USED IN LIFE, for this Psalm is not so much concerning the Believers death as concerning his life.   
Is it not very amazing, dear Friends, that the words which Jesus uttered on the Cross you may still continue to use? You may catch up their echo and not only when you come to die, but tonight, tomorrow morning and as long as you are alive, you may still repeat the text the Master quoted, and say, Into Your hands I commit my spirit.   
That is to say, first, let us cheerfully entrust our souls to God and feel that they are quite safe in His hands. Our spirit is the noblest part of our being; our body is only the husk, our spirit is the living kernel, so let us put it into Gods keeping. Some of you have never yet done that, so I invite you to do it now. It is the act of faith which saves the soul, that act which a man performs when he says, I trust myself to God as He reveals Himself in Christ Jesus. I cannot keep myself, but He can keep me and, by the precious blood of Christ He can cleanse me. So I just take my spirit and give it over into the great Fathers hands. You never really live till you do that! All that comes before that act of full surrender is death! But when you have once trusted Christ, then you have truly begun to live. And every day, as long as you live, take care that you repeat this process and cheerfully leave yourselves in Gods hands without any reserve. That is to say, give yourself up to Godyour body, to be healthy or to be sick, to be long-lived or to be suddenly cut off. Your soul and spirit, give them, also, up to God, to be made happy or to be made sad, just as He pleases. Give Your whole self up to Him and say to Him, My Father, make me rich or make me poor, give me sight or make me blind. Let me have all my senses or take them away. Make me famous or leave me to be obscure. I give myself up to Youinto Your hands I commit my spirit. I will no longer exercise my own choice, but You shall choose My inheritance for me. My times are in Your hands.   
Now, dear children of God, are you always doing this? Have you ever done it? I am afraid that there are some, even among Christs professing followers, who kick against Gods will and even when they say to God, Your will be done, they spoil it by adding, in their own mind, and my will, too. They pray, Lord, make my will Your will, instead of saying, Make Your will my will. Let us each one pray this prayer every day, Into Your hands I commit my spirit. I like, at family prayer, to put myself and all that I have into Gods hands in the morningand then, at night, to just look between His hands and see how safe I have been. And then to say to Him, Lord, shut me up again tonight! Take care of me all through the night watches. Into Your hands I commit my spirit.   
Notice, dear Friends, that our second text has these words at the end of itYou have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth. Is not that a good reason for giving yourself up entirely to God? Christ has redeemed you and, therefore, you belong to Him. If I am a redeemed man and I ask God to take care of me, I am but asking the King to take care of one of His own jewelsa jewel that cost Him the blood of His heart!   
And I may still more especially expect that He will do so, because of the title which is here given to HimYou have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth. Would He be the God of Truth if He began with redemption and ended with destructionif He began by giving His Son to die for us and then kept back other mercies which we daily need to bring us to Heaven? No, the gift of His Son is the pledge that He will save His people from their sins and bring them home to Gloryand He will do it. So, every day, go to Him with this declaration, Into Your hands I commit my spirit. No, not only every day, but all through the day! Does a horse run away with you? Then you cannot do better than say, Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit. And if the horse does not run away with you, you cannot do better than say the same words! Have you to go into a house where there is fever? I mean, is it your duty to go there? Then go saying, Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit. I would advise you to do this every time you walk down the street, or even while you sit in your own house.   
Dr. Gill, my famous predecessor, spent very much time in his study and, one day, somebody said to him, Well, at any rate, the studious man is safe from most of the accidents of life. It so happened that one morning, when the good man left his familiar armchair for a little while, there came a gale of wind that blew down a stack of chimneys which crashed through the roof and fell right into the place where he would have been sitting if the Providence of God had not just then drawn him away! And he said, I see that we need Divine Providence to care for us in our studies just as much as in the streets. Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit. I have often noticed that if any of our friends get into accidents and troubles, it is usually when they are away for a holiday. It is a curious thing, but I have often remarked about it. They go out for their health and come home sick! They leave us with all their limbs whole and return to us crippled! Therefore we must pray God to take special care of friends in the country or by the seaand we must commit ourselves to His hands wherever we may be. If we had to go into a leper colony, we would certainly ask God to protect us from the deadly leprosy. But we ought to equally seek the Lords protection while dwelling in the healthiest place or in our own homes!   
David said to the Lord, Into Your hands I commit my spirit. But let me beg you to add that word which our Lord insertedFather. David is often a good guide for us, but Davids Lord is far better. And if we follow Him, we shall improve upon David. So, let us each say, Father, Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit. That is a sweet way of living every daycommitting everything to our Heavenly Fathers hands, for those hands can do His child no unkindness. Father, I might not be able to trust Your angels, but I can trust You. The Psalmist does not say, Into the hand of Providence I commit my spirit. Do you notice how men try to get rid of God by saying, Providence did this, and, Providence did that, and, Providence did the other? If you ask them, What is Providence?they will probably reply, Well, Providence is Providence. That is all they can say.   
There is many a man who talks very confidently about reverencing nature, obeying the laws of nature, noting the powers of nature and so on. Step up to that eloquent lecturer and say to him, Will you kindly explain to me what nature is? He answers, Why, naturewell, it isnature. Just so, Sir, but, what is nature? And he says, Wellwellit is nature. And that is all you will get out of him. Now, I believe in nature and I believe in Providence, but at the back of everything, I believe in God, and in the God who has handsnot in an idol that has no hands and can do nothingbut in the God to whom I can say, Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit. I rejoice that I am able to put myself there, for I feel absolutely safe in trusting myself to Your keeping. So live, Beloved, and you shall live safely, happily and you shall have hope in your life, and hope in your death!   
III. My third text will not detain us many minutes. It is intended to explain to us THE USE OF OUR SAVIORS DYING WORDS FOR OURSELVES. Turn to the account of the death of Stephen, in the 7th chapter of Acts, at the 59th verse, and you will see, there, how far a man of God may dare to go in his last moments in quoting from David and from the Lord Jesus Christ. And they stoned Stephen, as he was calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. So here is a text for us to use when we come to dieLord Jesus, receive my spirit. I have explained to you that, strictly, we can hardly talk of yielding up our spirit, but we may speak of Christ receiving it and say with Stephen, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.   
What does this prayer mean? I must just hurriedly give you two or three thoughts concerning it and so close my discourse. I think this prayer means that, if we can die as Stephen did, we shall die with a certainty of immortality. Stephen prayed, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. He did not say, I am afraid my poor spirit is going to die. No, the spirit is something which still exists after death, something which Christ can receive and, therefore, Stephen asks Him to receive it! You and I are not going upstairs to die as if we were only like cats and dogswe go up there to die like immortal beings who fall asleep on earth and open our eyes in Heaven! Then, at the sound of the archangels trumpet, our very body is to rise to dwell, again, with our spiritwe have not any question about this matter! I think I have told you what an infidel once said to a Christian man, Some of you Christians have great fear in dying because you believe that there is another state to follow this one. I have not the slightest fear, for I believe that I shall be annihilated and, therefore, all fear of death is gone from me. Yes, said the Christian, and in that respect you seem to me to be on equal terms with that bull grazing over there, which, like yourself, is free from any fear of death. Pray, Sir, let me ask you a simple question. Have you any hope? Hope, Sir? Hope, Sir? No, I have no hope! Of course I have no hope, Sir. Ah, then! replied the other, despite the fears that sometimes come over feeble Believers, they have a hope which they would not and could not give up. And that hope is that our spiriteven that spirit which we commit into Jesus Christs handsshall be forever with the Lord.   
The next thought is that, to a man who can die as Stephen did, there is a certainty that Christ is nearso near that the man speaks to Him and says, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. In Stephens case, the Lord Jesus was so near that the martyr could see Him, for he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Many dying saints have borne a similar testimony. It is no strange thing for us to hear them say, before they die, that they could see within the pearly gates and they have told us this with such evident truthfulness, and with such rapture, or sometimes so calmlyin such a businesslike tone of voicewe were sure that they were neither deceived nor speaking falsehood. They spoke what they knew to be true, for Jesus was there with them! Yes, Beloved, before you can call your children around your deathbed, Jesus will already be there! And into His hands you may commit your spirit.

Moreover, there is a certainty that we are quite safe in His hands. Wherever else we are insecure, if we ask Him to receive our spirit, and He receives it, who can hurt us? Who can pluck us out of His hands? Awaken, Death and hail! Come forth, all you powers of darkness! What can you do when once a spirit is in the hands of the Omnipotent Redeemer? We will be safe there!   
Then there is the other certainty, that He is quite willing to take us into His hands. Let us put ourselves into His hands nowand then we need not be ashamed to repeat the operation every day and we may be sure that we shall not be rejected at the last. I have often told you of the good old woman who was dying and to whom someone said, Are you not afraid to die? Oh, no, she replied, there is nothing at all to fear. I have dipped my foot in the river of death every morning before I have had my breakfast, and I am not afraid to die now. You remember that dear saint who died in the night, and who had left written on a piece of paper by her bedside these lines which, before she fell asleep, she felt strong enough to pencil down?   
*Since Jesus is mine, Ill not fear undressing, But gladly put off these garments of clay To die in the Lord, is a Covenant blessing, Since Jesus to Glory thro death led the way.* It was well that she could say itand may we be able to say the same whenever the Master calls us to go up higher! I want, dear Friends, that we should, all of us, have as much willingness to depart as if it were a matter of will with us! Blessed be God it is not left to our choiceit is not left to our will when we shall die. God has appointed that day and ten thousand devils cannot consign us to the grave before our time! We shall not die till God decrees it   
*Plagues and deaths around me fly,   
Till He please I cannot die!   
Not a single shaft can hit   
Till the God of love sees fit.*   
But let us be just as willing to depart as if it were really a matter of choice, for, wisely, carefully, coolly consider that if it were left to us, we should none of us be wise if we did not choose to go! Apart from the coming of our Lord, the most miserable thing that I know of would be a suspicion that we might not die. Do you know what quaint old Rowland Hill used to say when he found himself getting very old? He said, Surely they must be forgetting me up there. And every now and then, when some dear old saint was dying, he would say, When you get to Heaven, give my love to John Berridge, and John Bunyan and ever so many more of the good Johns, and tell them I hope they will see poor old Rowley up there before long. Well, there was common sense in that wishing to get Home, longing to be with God. To be with Christ is far better than to be here!   
Sobriety itself would make us choose to die! Well, then, do not let us run back and become utterly unwilling and struggle and strive and fret and fume over it. When I hear of Believers who do not like to talk about death, I am afraid concerning them. It is greatly wise to be familiar with our resting place. When I went, recently, to the cemetery at Norwood, to lay the body of our dear Brother Perkins there for a little while, I felt that it was a healthy thing for me to stand at the graves brink and to walk amid that forest of memorials of the dead, for this is where I, too, must go. You living men, come and view the ground where you must shortly lie and, as it must be so, let us who are Believers welcome it!   
But, what if you are not Believers? Ah, that is another matter altogether! If you have not believed in Christ, you may well be afraid even to rest on the seat where you are sitting! I wonder that the earth itself does not say, O God, I will not hold this wretched sinner up any longer! Let me open my mouth and swallow him! All nature must hate the man who hates God! Surely, all things must loathe to minister to the life of a man who does not live unto God. Oh that you would seek the Lord and trust Christ and find eternal life! If you have done so, do not be afraid to go forth to live, or to die, just as God pleases.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**JOHN 15:1-8.**

Verse 1. I am the true vine. Now we know where to find the true Church. It is to be found only in Christ and in those who are joined to Him in mystical but real union. I am the true vine.

1. And My Father is the vinedresser. Now we know who is the true Guardian of the Church. Not the so-called holy father at Rome, but that Father above, who is the true Guardian, Ruler, Keeper, Preserver, Purifier, Vinedresser of the one Church, the vine!

2. Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away. There are many such branches, in Christs visible Church which are not fruitbearing branches and, consequently, are not partakers of the sap of life and Grace which flows into the branches that are vitally joined to the central stem. These fruitless branches are to be taken away.

2. And every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. There is some work, then, for the knife upon all the branchescutting off for those that are fruitlesscutting for those that are bearing some fruit that they may bring forth yet more.

3. Now you are clean [purged] through the word which I have spoken unto you. The Word is often the knife with which the great Vinedresser prunes the vine. And, Brothers and Sisters, if we were more willing to feel the edge of the Word, and to let it cut away even something that may be very dear to us, we would not need so much pruning by affliction. It is because that first knife does not always produce the desired result that another sharp tool is used by which we are effectually pruned.

4. Abide in Me, and I in you. Do not merely find a temporary shelter in Me, as a ship runs into harbor in stormy weather and then comes out again when the gale is over, but cast anchor in Me, as the vessel does when it reaches its desired haven. Be not as branches that are tied on and so can be taken off, but be livingly joined to Me. Abide in Me.

4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abides in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in Me. You must bear fruit, or else be cast away, but you cannot bear any fruit except by real union and constant communion with Jesus Christ your Lord!

5. I am the vine, you are the branches: he that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing. Not merely will you do very little, but you can do nothing at all if you are severed from Christ! You are absolutely and entirely dependent upon Christ, both for your life and for your fruit-bearing. Do we not wish to have it so, Beloved? It is the incipient principle of apostasy when a man wishes to be independent of Christ in any degreewhen he says, Give me the portion of goods that falls to me that I may have something in hand, some spending money of my own. No, you must, from day to day, from hour to hour and even from moment to moment, derive life, light, love, everything that is good from Christ! What a blessing that it is so!

6. If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. There is a sad future in store for tares, according to another parable, but, somehow, there is a much sadder lot reserved for those that were, in some sense, branches of the vinethose who made a profession of faith in Christ, though they were never vitally united to Him. Those who, for a while, did rum well, yet were hindered. What was it that hindered them that they should not obey the Truth of God? Oh, it is sad, indeed, that any should have had any sort of connection with that Divine Stem and yet should be cast into the fire!

7. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Do not think that all men can pray alike effectually, for it is not so. There are some whom God will hear and some whom God will not hear. And there are some even of His own children whom He will hear in things absolutely vital and essential, to whom He never gave carte blanche after this fashion. You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. No, if you will not hear Gods words, He will not hear yours! And if His words do not abide in you, your words shall not have power with Him. They may be directed to Heaven, but the Lord will not listen to them so as to have regard to them. Oh, it needs very tender walking for one who would be mighty in prayer! You shall find that those who have had their will at the Throne of Grace are men who have done Gods will in other placesit mast be so. The greatest favorite at court will have a double portion of the jealousy of his monarch, and he must be especially careful that he orders his steps aright, or else the king will not continue to favor him as he was known to do. There is a sacred discipline in Christs house, a part of which consists in this, that, as our obedience to our God declines, so will our power in prayer decrease at the same time.

8. Herein is My Father glorified, that he bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. If we are His true disciples, we also shall bring forth much fruit.

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THE PREPARATORY PRAYERS OF CHRIST   
NO. 3178

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30TH, 1909,

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 7, 1873.

**Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus, also being baptized, and praying, the Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, You are My Beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.   
Luke 3:21, 22.**

**And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him, His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles.**

**Luke 6:12,13.**

***And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His Countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.   
Luke 9:28, 29.***

***And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.   
Matthew 14:23-25.***

***Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead were laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always: but because of the people here, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me.***

***John 11:41, 42.***

***And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren. Luke 22:31, 32.***

***And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. Luke 23:46.***

THERE is one peculiarity about the life of our Lord Jesus Christ which everybody must have noticed who has carefully read the four Gospels, namely, that He was a Man of much prayer. He was mighty as a Preacher, for even the officers who were sent to arrest Him said, Never man spoke like this Man. But He appears to have been even mightier in prayer, if such a thing could be possible! We do not read that His disciples ever asked Him to teach them to preach, but we are told that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray. He had no doubt been praying with such amazing fervor that His disciples realized that He was a master of the holy art of prayer and they, therefore, desired to learn the secret for themselves. The whole life of our Lord Jesus Christ was one of prayer. Though we are often told about His praying, we feel that we scarcely need to be informed of it, for we know that He must have been a Man of prayer. His acts are the acts of a prayerful Man. His words speak to us like the words of One whose heart was constantly lifted up in prayer to His Father. You could not imagine that He would have breathed out such blessings upon men if He had not first breathed in the atmosphere of Heaven! He must have been much in prayer or He could not have been so abundant in service and so gracious in sympathy.

Prayer seems to be like a silver thread running through the whole of our Saviors life and we have the record of His prayers on many special occasions. It struck me that it would be both interesting and instructive for us to notice some of the seasons which Jesus spent in prayer. I have selected a few which occurred either before some great work or some great suffering, so our subject will really be the preparatory prayers of Christthe prayers of Christ as He was approaching something which would put a peculiar stress and strain upon His Manhood, either for service or for suffering. And if the consideration of this subject shall lead all of us to learn the practical lesson of praying at all timesand yet to have special seasons for prayer just before any peculiar trial or unusual servicewe shall not have met in vain!

I. The first prayer we are to consider is OUR LORDS PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR HIS BAPTISM. It is in Luke 3:21, 22Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus, also being baptized, and praying, (it seems to have been a continuous act in which He had been previously occupied), the Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, You are My Beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.

The Baptism of our Lord was the commencement of His manifestation to the sons of men. He was now about to take upon Himself in full all the works of His Messiahship and, consequently, we find Him very specially engaged in prayer. And, Beloved, it seems to me to be peculiarly appropriate that when any of us have been converted and are about to make a Scriptural profession of our faithabout to take up the soldiers life under the great Captain of our salvationabout to start out as pilgrims to Zions cityI say that it seems to me to be peculiarly appropriate for us to spend much time in very special prayer! I would be very sorry to think that anyone would venture to come to be baptized, or to be united with a Christian Church without having made that action a matter of much solemn consideration and earnest prayer. But when the decisive step is about to be taken, our whole being should be very specially concentrated upon our supplication at the Throne of Grace.

Of course we do not believe in any sacramental efficacy attaching to the observance of the ordinance, but we receive a special blessing in the act, itself, because we are moved to pray even more than usual before it takes place and at the time. At all events, I know that it was so in my own case. It was many years ago, but the remembrance of it is very vivid at this moment and it seems to me as though it only happened yesterday! It was in the month of May and I rose very early in the morning so that I might have a long time in private prayer. Then I had to walk about eight miles, from Newmarket to Isleham, where I was to be baptized in the river. I think that the blessing I received that day resulted largely from that season of solitary supplication and my meditation, as I walked along the country roads and lanes, upon my indebtedness to my Savior and my desire to live to His praise and Glory. Dear young people, take care that you start right in your Christian life by being much in prayer! A profession of faith that does not begin with prayer will end in disgrace. If you come to join the Church, but do not pray to God to uphold you in consistency of life, and to make your profession sincere, the probability is that you are already a hypocrite! Or if that is too uncharitable a suggestion, the probability is that if you are converted, the work has been of a very superficial character and not of that deep and earnest kind of which prayer would be the certain index. So again I say to you that if any of you are thinking of making a profession of your faith in Christ, be sure, then, in preparation for it, you devote a special season to drawing near to God in prayer.

As I read the first text, no doubt you noticed that it was while Christ was praying that, the Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, You are My Beloved Son, in You I am well pleased. There are three occasions of which we read in Scripture when God bore audible testimony to Christ. And on each of these three occasions He was either in the act of prayer or He had been praying but a very short time before. Christs prayer is especially mentioned in each instance side by side with the witness of His Fatherand if you, beloved Friends, want to have the witness of God either at your Baptism or on any subsequent act of your lifeyou must obtain it by prayer! The Holy Spirit never sets His seal to a prayerless religion! It has not in it that of which He can approve. It must be truly said of a man, Behold, he prays, before the Lord bears such testimony concerning him as He bore concerning Saul of Tarsus, He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles.

So we find that it was while Christ was praying at His Baptism that the Holy Spirit came upon Him, in a bodily shape like a dove, to qualify Him for His public service! And it is through prayer that we, also, receive that spiritual enrichment that equips us as co-workers together with God. Without prayer you will remain in a region that is desolate as a desert! But bend your knees in supplication to the Most High and you have reached the land of promise, the country of benediction! Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you, not merely as to His gracious Presence, but as to the powerful and efficacious working of the Holy Spirit! More prayermore power! The more pleading with God that there is, the more power will there be in pleading with men, for the Holy Spirit will come upon us while we are pleading and so we shall be fitted and qualified to do the work to which we are called of God!

Let us learn, then, from this first instance of our Saviors preparatory prayer at His Baptism, the necessity of special supplication on our part in similar circumstances. If we are making our first public profession of faith in Him, or if we are renewing that profession. If we are moving to another sphere of service, if we are taking office in the Church as deacons or elders, if we are commencing the work of the pastorate. If we are in any way coming out more distinctly before the world as the servants of Christ, let us set apart special seasons for prayerand so seek a double portion of the Holy Spirits blessing to rest upon us!

II. The second instance of the preparatory prayers of Christ which we are to consider is OUR LORDS PRAYER PREPARATORY TO CHOOSING HIS TWELVE APOSTLES. It is recorded in Luke 6:12, 13And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. [See Sermon #798, Volume 14SPECIAL PRO

TRACTED PRAYERRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at   
http://www.spurgeongems.org.] And when it was day, He called unto Him, His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles.

Our Lord was about to extend His ministry. His one tongue, His one voice might have delivered His personal message throughout Palestine, but He was desirous of having far more done than He could individually accomplish in the brief period of His public ministry upon earth. He would therefore have 12 Apostles and afterwards 70 disciples who would go forth in His name and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. He was infinitely wiser than the wisest of mere men, so why did He not at once select His 12 Apostles? The men had been with Him from the beginning and He knew their characters and their fitness for the work He was about to entrust to them, so He might have said to Himself, I will have James, John, Peter and the rest of the twelve, and send them forth to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and to exercise the miraculous powers with which I will endow them. He might have done this if He had not been the Christ of Godbut being the Anointed of the Father, He would not take such an important step as that without long continued prayer. So He went alone to His Father, told Him all that He desired to do and pleaded with Him, not in the brief fashion that we call prayer which usually lasts only a few minutesbut His pleading lasted through an entire night!

What our Lord asked for, or how He prayed, we cannot tell, for it is not revealed to us. But I think we shall not be guilty of vain or unwarranted curiosity if we use our imagination for a minute or two. In doing so, with the utmost reverence, I think I hear Christ crying to His Father whom the right men might be selected as the leaders of the Church of God upon the earth. I think I also hear Him pleading that upon these chosen men a Divine influence might rest, that they might be kept in character, honest in heart and holy in lifeand that they might also be preserved in sound Doctrine and not turn aside to error and falsehood. Then I think I hear Him praying that success might attend their preaching. That they might be guided where to go, where the blessing of God would go with them and that they might find many hearts willing to receive their testimony. And that when their personal ministry should end, they might pass on their commission to others so that as long as there should be a harvest to be reaped for the Lord, there should be laborers to reap itas long as there should be lost sinners in the world, there would also be earnest, consecrated men and women seeking to pluck the brands from the burning. I will not attempt to describe the mighty wrestling of that night of prayer when, in strong cries and tears, Christ poured out His very soul into His Fathers ear and heart! But it is clear that He would not dispatch a solitary messenger with the glad tidings of the Gospel unless He was assured that His Fathers authority and the Spirits power would accompany the servants whom He was about to send forth.

What a lesson there is in all this to us! What Infallible Guidance there is here as to how a missionary society should be conducted! Where there is one committee meeting for business, there ought to be 50 for prayer! Whenever we get a missionary society whose main business it is to pray, we shall have a society whose distinguishing characteristic will be that it is the means of saving a multitude of souls! And to you, my dear young Brothers in the College, I feel moved to say that I believe we shall have a far larger blessing than we have already had when the spirit of prayer in the College is greater than it now is, though I rejoice to know that it is very deep and fervent even now! You, Brothers, have never been lacking in prayerfulness. I thank God that I have never had occasion to complain or to grieve on that account, but still, who knows what blessing might follow a night of prayer at the beginning or at any part of the sessionor an all-night wrestling in prayer in the privacy of your own bedrooms? Then, when you go out to preach the Gospel on the Sabbath, you will find that the best preparation for preaching is much praying! I have always found that the meaning of a text can be better learned by prayer than in any other way. Of course we must consult lexicons and commentaries to see the literal meaning of the words and their relation to one anotherbut when we have done all that, we shall still find that our greatest help will come from prayer! Oh, that every Christian enterprise were commenced with prayer, continued with prayer and crowned with prayer! Then might we, also, expect to see it crowned with Gods blessing!

So once again I remind you that our Saviors example teaches us that for seasons of special service, we need not only prayers of a brief character, excellent as they are for ordinary occasions, but special protracted wrestling with God like that of Jacob at the Brook Jabbok, so that each one of us can say to the Lord, with holy determination

*With You all night I mean to stay,*

*And wrestle till the break of day.*   
When such sacred persistence in prayer as this becomes common throughout the whole Church of Christ, Satans long usurpation will be coming to an end and we shall be able to say to our Lord, as the 70 disciples did when they returned to Him with joy, Even the devils are subject unto us through Your name!

III. Now, thirdly, let us consider OUR LORDS PRAYER PREPARATORY TO HIS TRANSFIGURATION. You will find it in Luke 9:28, 29And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His Countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. You see that it was as He prayed that He was transfigured.

Now, Beloved, do you really desire to reach the highest possible attainments of the Christian life? Do you, in your inmost soul, pine and pant after the choicest joys that can be known by human beings this side of Heaven? Do you aspire to rise to full fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to be transformed into His image from glory to glory? If so, the way is open to you! It is the way of prayeronly there will you find these priceless blessings! If you fail in prayer, you will assuredly never come to Tabors top! There is no hope, dear Friends, of our ever attaining to anything like a transfiguration and being covered with the Light of God so that whether in the body or out of the body we cannot tell, unless we are much in prayer!

I believe that we make more real advance in the Divine Life in an hour of prayer than we do in a month of hearing sermons. I do not mean that we are to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but I am sure that without the praying, the hearing is of little worth! We must pray. We must plead with God if we are to really grow spiritually. In prayer, very much of our spiritual digestion is done. When we are hearing the Word, we are very much like the cattle when they are cropping the grassbut when we follow our hearing with meditation and prayer, we do, as it were, lie down in the green pasturesand get the rich nutriment for our souls out of the Truth of God. My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, would you shake off the earthliness that still clings to you? Would you get rid of your doubts and your fears? Would you overcome your worldliness? Would you master all your besetting sins? Would you glow and glisten in the brightness and Glory of the holiness of God? Then be much in prayer, as Jesus was! I am sure that it must be so and that, apart from prayer, you will make no advance in the Divine Lifebut that in waiting upon God, you shall renew your spiritual strength, you shall mount up with wings as eagles, you shall run and not be wearyyou shall walk and not faint!

IV. I must hasten on lest time should fail us before I have finished. And I must put together two of OUR LORDS PRAYERS PREPARATORY TO GREAT MIRACLES.

The first, which preceded His stilling of the tempest on the Lake of Gennesaret, is recorded in Matthew 14:23-25And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. He had been pleading with His Father for His disciples and then, when their ship was tossed by the waves, and driven back by the contrary winds, He came down to them from the lofty place where He had been praying for them, making a pathway for Himself across the turbulent waters that He was about to calm. Before He walked upon those tossing billows, He had prayed to His Father. Before He stilled the storm, He had prevailed with God in prayer.

Am I to do any great work for God? Then I must first be mighty upon my knees! Is there a man here who is to be the means of covering the sky with clouds and bringing the rain of Gods blessing on the dry and barren Church which so sorely needs reviving and refreshing? Then he must be prepared for that great work as Elijah was when, on the top of Carmel, He cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees, and prayed as only he could pray! We shall never see a little cloud like a mans hand, which shall afterwards cover all the sky with blackness, unless first of all we know how to cry mightily unto the Most High! But when we have done that, then shall we see what we desire. Moses would never have been able to control the children of Israel as he did if he had not first been in communion with his God in the desert, and afterwards in the mountain. So if we are to be men of power, we also must be men of prayer!

The other instance to which I want to refer, showing how our Lord prayed before working a mighty miracle, is when He stood by the grave of Lazarus. You will find the account of it in John 11:41, 42Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always: but because of the people here, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me. He did not cry, Lazarus, come forth, so that the people heard it, and Lazarus heard it, until first He had prayed, My Father, grant that Lazarus may rise from the dead, and had received the assurance that he would do so as soon as he was called by Christ to come forth from the grave.

But, Brothers and Sisters, do you not see that if Christ, who was so strong, needed to pray thus, what need there is for us, who are so weak, to also pray? If He, who was God as well as Man, prayed to His Father before He worked a miracle, how necessary it is for us, who are merely men, to go to the Throne of Grace and plead there with importunate fervency if we are ever to do anything for God! I fear that many of us have been feeble out here in public because we have been feeble out there on the lone mountainside where we ought to have been in fellowship with God. The way to be fitted to work what men will call wonders, is to go to the God of Wonders and implore Him to gird us with His all-sufficient strength so that we may do exploits to His praise and Glory!

V. The next prayer we are to consider is OUR LORDS PRAYER PREPARATORY TO PETERS FALL. We have the record of that in Luke 22:31, 32And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your breth

ren. [See Sermons #2620, Volume 45CHRISTS PRAYER FOR PETER; #2034, Volume 34 PETERS RESTORATION and #2035, Volume 34PETER AFTER HIS RESTORATIONRead/download all the sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

There is much that is admirable and instructive in this utterance of our Lord. Satan had not then tempted Peter, yet Christ had already pleaded for the Apostle whose peril He clearly foresaw! Some of us would have thought that we were very prompt if we had prayed for a Brother or Sister who had been tempted and who had yielded to the temptation. But our Lord prayed for Peter before he was tempted. As soon as Satan had desired to have him in his sieve, that he might sift him as wheat, our Savior knew the thought that was formed in the diabolic mindand He at once pleaded for His imperiled servant who did not even know the danger that was threatening him! Christ is always beforehand with us. Before the storm comes, He has provided the harbor of refuge. Before the disease attacks us, He has the remedy ready to cure it. His mercy outruns our misery!

What a lesson we ought to learn from this action of Christ! Whenever we see any friend in peril through temptation, let us not begin to talk about him, but let us at once pray for him! Some persons are very fond of hinting and insinuating about what is going to happen to certain people with whom they are acquainted. I pray you, beloved Friends, not to do it! Do not hint that So-and-So is likely to fall, but pray that he may not fall. Do not insinuate anything about him to others, but tell the Lord what your anxiety is concerning him.

But So-and-So has made a lot of money and he is getting very purseproud. Well, even if it is so, do not talk about him to others, but pray God to grant that he may not be allowed to become purse-proud. Do not say that he will be, but pray constantly that he may not beand do not let anyone but the Lord know that you are praying for him.

Then there is So-and-So. He is so elated with the success he has had that one can scarcely get to speak to him. Well then, Brother, pray that he may not be elated. Do not say that you are afraid he is growing proud, for that would imply what you would be if you were in his place! Your fear reveals a secret concerning your own nature, for what you judge that he would be is exactly what you would do in similar circumstances! We always measure other peoples corn with our own bushelwe do not borrow their bushel. And we can judge ourselves by our judgment of others. Let us cease these censures and judgmentsand let us pray for our Brothers and Sisters. If you fear that a minister is somewhat turning aside from the faith, or if you think that his ministry is not so profitable as it used to be, or if you see any other imperfection in him, do not go and talk about it to people in the street, for they cannot set him rightgo and tell his Master about him! Pray for him and ask the Lord to make right whatever is wrong. There is a sermon by old Matthew Wilks about our being Epistles of Christ, written not with ink, and not on tablets of stone, but in fleshy tablets of the heart. And he said that ministers are the pens with which God writes on their hearts heartsand that pens need sharpening every now and thenbut even when they are sharp, they cannot write without ink! So he said that the best service that the people could render to the preacher was to pray the Lord to give them new pens and dip them in the fresh ink that they might write better than before! Do so, dear Friendsdo not blot the page with your censures and unkind remarks, but help the preacher by pleading for him even as Christ prayed for Peter!

VI. Now I must close with our LORDS PREPARATORY PRAYER JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH. You will find it in Luke 23:46And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. [See Sermons #2311,

Volume 39OUR LORDS LAST CRY FROM THE CROSS and #2644, Volume 45THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSSRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

Our Lord Jesus was very specially occupied in prayer as the end of His earthly life drew near. He was about to die as His peoples Surety and Substitute. The wrath of God, which was due to them, fell upon Him! Knowing all that was to befall Him, He set His face steadfastly to go unto Jerusalem and, in due time, He endured the Cross, despising the shame. But He did not go to Gethsemane and Golgotha without prayer! Son of God as He was, He would not undergo that terrible ordeal without much supplication. You know how much there is about His praying in the later chapters of Johns Gospel. There is especially that great prayer of His for His Church in which He pleaded with amazing fervor for those whom His Father had given Him. Then there was His agonized pleading in Gethsemane when His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. We will not say much about that, but we can well imagine that the bloody sweat was the outward and visible expression of the intense agony of His soul which was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.

All that Christ did and suffered was full of prayer, so it was but fitting that His last utterance on earth should be the prayerful surrender of His spirit into the hands of His Father. He had already pleaded for His murderers, Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do. He had promised to grant the request of the penitent thief, Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. Now nothing remained for Him to do but to say, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. His life, which had been a life of prayer, was thus closed with prayeran example well worthy of His peoples imitation!

Perhaps I am addressing someone who is conscious that a serious illness is threatening. Well then, dear Friend, prepare for it by prayer! Are you dreading a painful operation? Nothing will help you to bear it so well as pleading with God concerning it! Prayer will help you mentally as well as physicallyyou will face the ordeal with far less fear if you have laid your care before the Lord and committed yourselfbody, soul and spiritinto His hands. If you are expecting, before long, to reach the end of your mortal life either because of your advanced age, or your weak constitution, or the inroads of the deadly consumptionpray much. You need not fear to be baptized in Jordans swelling flood if you are constantly being baptized in prayer! Think of your Savior in the Garden and on the Crossand pray even as He didNot my will, but yours be done...Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.

While I have been speaking to Believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, there may have been some here who are still unconvertedwho have imagined that prayer is the way to Heavenyet it is not! Prayer is a great and precious help on the road, but Christ, alone, is the Way! And the very first step heavenward is to trust ourselves wholly to Him. Faith in Christ is the all-important matter and if you truly believe in Him, you are saved! But the very first thing that a saved man does is to prayand the very last thing that he does before he gets to Heaven is to pray. Well did Montgomery write

**Prayer is the contrite sinners voice, Returning from his ways   
While angels in their songs rejoice, And cry, Behold, he prays!   
Prayer is the Christians vital breath, The Christians native air!   
His watchword at the gates of death He enters Heaven with prayer!**

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: LUKE 18:1-14.**   
Verse 1. And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought   
always to pray, and not to faint. [See Sermon #2519, Volume 43WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] An

old writer says that many of Christs parables need a key to unlock them. Here, the key hangs outside the door, for at the very beginning of the parable we are told what Christ meant to teach by itthat men ought always to pray, and not to faint. And this is the parable.

2. Saying, There was in a city a judge who feared not God, neither regarded man. It is a great pity for any city and for any country where the judges do not fear Godwhere they feel that they have been put into a high office in which they may do just as they please. There were such judges in the olden times even in this landGod grant that we may not see any more like them!

3. And there was a widow in that city and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. She had no friend to plead for her. She had nobody to help her and, therefore, when she was robbed of her little patrimony, she went to the court and asked the judge for justice.

4. And he would not for a while. He preferred to be unjust. As he could do as he liked, he liked to do as he should not.   
4, 5. But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. She seems to have gone to him so often that he grew quite fatigued and pained by her persistence! The Greek words are very expressive, as though she had beaten him in the eyes and so bruised him that he could not endure it any longer. Of course, the poor woman had not done anything of the kindbut the judge thus describes her continual importunity as a wounding of him, as an attacking of him, an assault upon himfor he had, perhaps, a little conscience left. He had, at least, enough honesty to confess that he did not fear God, nor regard man. There are some of whom that is true, who will not admit it, but this judge admitted itand though he was but little troubled about ithe said, that I may not be worried to death by this womans continual coming, I will grant her request and avenge her of her adversary.   
6, 7. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says. And shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him, though He

bears long with them? [See Sermon #2836, Volume 6PRAYERFUL IMPORTUNITY Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He is no

unjust judge! He is One who is perfectly holy, just, true and who appears in a nearer and dearer Character than that of judge, even as the One who chose His people from eternity! Shall not God avenge His own elect? Yes, that He willonly let them persevere in prayer and cry day and night unto Him.

8. I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? [See Sermon #1963, Volume  
33THE SEARCH FOR FAITHRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] If anybody can find it, He can, for He is the Creator of it! Yet, when He comes, there will be so little of it in proportion to what He deserves, and so little in proportion to the loving kindness of the Lord, that it will seem as if even He could not find italthough if there were only as much faith as a grain of mustard seed He would be the first to spy it out!

9. And He spoke this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. It seems as if these two things went togetheras our esteem of ourselves goes up, our esteem of others goes downthe scales seem to work that way.

10. Two men went up into the Temple to pray. [See Sermon #2395, Volume 41  
THE BLESSINGS OF PUBLIC WORSHIPRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It was the place that was specially dedicated for prayer. It was the place where God had promised to meet with suppliants. They did well, in those days, to go up into the Temple to pray to God. Though, in these days

*Wherever we seek Him, He is found,*

*And every place is hallowed ground.*   
It is sheer superstition which imagines that one place is better for prayer than another! So long as we can be quiet and still, let us pray wherever we may be.

10, 11. The one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not as other men areextortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. It is possible that this was all true. We have no indication that he was a hypocriteand if what he said was truethere was something in it for which he might well thank God. It was a great mercy not to be an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adultererbut what spoilt his expression of thankfulness was that back-handed blow at the other man who was praying in the same Templeor even as this publican. What had the Pharisee to do with him? He had quite enough to occupy his thoughts if he could only see himself as he really was in Gods sight!

12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Observe that there is no prayer in all that the Pharisee said. There was a great deal of self-righteousness and self-congratulation, but nothing else. There was certainly no prayer at all in it!

13. And the publican, standing afar offJust on the edge of the crowd, keeping as far away as he could from the Most Holy Place  
13. Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. [See Sermon #1949, Volume

33A SERMON FOR THE WORST MAN ON EARTHRead/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That was all prayerit was a prayer for mercy, it was a prayer in which the suppliant took his right place, for he was, as he said, a sinner. He does not describe himself as a penitent sinner, or as a praying sinner, but simply as a sinner. And as a sinner, he goes to God asking for mercy. Our English version does not give the full meaning of the publicans prayer, it is, God be propitious to me, that is, be gracious to me through the ordained Sacrifice. And that is one of the points of the prayer that made it so acceptable to God. There is a mention of the Atonement in it. There is a pleading of the sacrificial blood. It was a real prayer and an acceptable prayerwhile the Pharisees boasting was not a prayer at all.

14. I tell you, this manThis publican, sinner as he had been, though he had no broad phylacteries like the Pharisee had, though he may not have washed his hands before he came into the Temple, as, no doubt the Pharisee didthis man, who could not congratulate himself upon his own excellence, this man

14. Went down to his house justified rather than the other. He obtained both justification and the peace of mind that comes from it! God smiled upon him and set him at ease concerning his sin. The other man received no justificationhe had not sought it and he did not get it. He had a kind of spurious ease of mind when he went into the Temple and he probably carried it away with him! But he certainly was not justified in

the sight of God. [See Sermon #2687, Volume 46TOO GOOD TO BE SAVED!Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

14. For everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. God turns things upside down! If we think much of ourselves, He makes us little, and if we make little of ourselves, we shall find that a humble and contrite heart He will not despise! May He teach us so to pray that we may go down to our house justified, as the publican was!

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 #860 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MOURNING AT THE SIGHT OF THE CRUCIFIED   
NO. 860

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 14, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned. Luke 23:48.**

MANY in that crowd came together to behold the crucifixion of Jesus, in a condition of the most furious malice. They had hounded the Savior as dogs pursue a stag and at last, all mad with rage, they hemmed Him in for death. Others, willing enough to spend an idle hour and to gaze upon a sensational spectacle, swelled the mob until a vast assembly congregated around the little hill upon which the three crosses were raised. There unanimously, whether of malice or of wantonness, they all joined in mockery of the Victim who hung upon the center Cross. Some thrust out their tongue. Some wagged their heads. Others scoffed and jeeredsome taunted Him in words and others in signsbut all alike exulted over the defenseless man who was given as a prey to their teeth.

Earth never beheld a scene in which so much unrestrained derision and expressive contempt were poured upon one man so unanimously and for so long a time. It must have been hideous to the last degree to have seen so many grinning faces and mocking eyes and to have heard so many cruel words and scornful shouts. The spectacle was too detestable to be long endured of Heaven. Suddenly the sun, shocked at the scene, veiled his face and for three long hours the ribald crew sat shivering in midday midnight.

Meanwhile the earth trembled beneath their feet. The rocks were split and the temple, in superstitious defense of whose perpetuity they had committed the murder of the Just, had its holy veil torn as though by strong invisible hands. The news of this and the feeling of horror produced by the darkness and the earth tremor caused a revulsion of feelings. There were no more gibes and jests. No more thrusting out of tongues and cruel mockeriesthey went their way solitary and alone to their homes, or in little silent groups, while each man after the manner of Orientals when struck with sudden urge, smote upon his breast.

Far different was the procession to the gates of Jerusalem from that march of madness which had come out. Observe the power which God has over human minds! See how He can tame the wildest and make the most malicious and proud to cower down at His feet when He does but manifest Himself in the wonders of Nature! How much more cowed and terrified will they be when He makes bare His arm and comes forth in the judgments of His wrath to deal with them according to their deeds! This sudden and memorable change in so vast a multitude is the apt representative of two other remarkable mental changes. How like it is to the gracious transformation which a sight of the Cross has often worked most blessedly in the hearts of men!

Many have come under the sound of the Gospel resolved to scoff, but they have returned to pray. The most idle and even the basest motives have brought men under the preaching, but when Jesus has been lifted up, they have been savingly drawn to Him and as a consequence have struck upon their breasts in repentance and gone their way to serve the Savior whom they once blasphemed. Oh, the power, the melting, conquering, transforming power of that dear Cross of Christ! My Brethren, we have but to abide by the preaching of it. We have but constantly to tell abroad the matchless story and we may expect to see the most remarkable spiritual results!

We need despair of no man now that Jesus has died for sinners. With such a hammer as the doctrine of the Cross, the most flinty heart will be broken! And with such a fire as the sweet love of Christ, the most mighty iceberg will be melted! We need never despair for the heathenish or superstitious races of men. If we can but find occasion to bring the doctrine of Christ Crucified into contact with their natures, it will yet change them and Christ will be their king.

A second and most awful change is also foretold by the incident in our text, namely, the effect which a sight of Christ enthroned will have upon the proud and obstinate, who in this life rebelled against Him. Here they fearlessly jested concerning Him and insultingly demanded, Who is the Lord, that we should obey Him? Here they boldly united in a conspiracy to break His bands asunder and cast His cords from them. But when they wake up at the blast of the trumpet and see the Great White Throne, which, like a mirror, shall reflect their conduct upon them, what a change will be in their minds!

Where now your quibbles and your jests? Where now your malicious speeches and your persecuting words? What? Is there not one among you who can play the man and insult the Man of Nazareth to His face? No, not one! Like cowardly dogs they slink away! The infidels bragging tongue is silent! The proud spirit of the atheist is brokenhis blustering and his carping are hushed forever! With shrieks of dismay and clamorous cries of terror, they entreat the hills to cover them and the mountains to conceal them from the face of that very Man whose Cross was once the subject of their scorn! O take heed, you sinners, take heed, I pray you and be you changed this day by Divine Grace, lest you be changed by-and-by by terror, for the heart which will not be bent by the love of Christ shall be broken by the terror of His name!

If Jesus upon the Cross does not save you, Christ on the Throne shall damn you! If Christ dying is not your life, Christ living shall be your death! If Christ on earth is not your Heaven, Christ coming from Heaven shall be your Hell! O may Gods Grace work a blessed turning of Grace in each of us, that we may not be turned into Hell in the dread day of reckoning!

We shall now draw nearer to the text and in the first place, analyze the general mourning around the Cross. Secondly, we shall, if God shall help us, endeavor to join in the sorrowful chorus. And then, before we conclude, we shall remind you that at the foot of the Cross our sorrow must be mingled with joy.

I. First, then, let us ANALYZE THE GENERAL MOURNING which this text describes. All the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned. They all smote their breasts, but not all from the same cause. They were all afraid, not all from the same reason. The outward manifestations were alike in the whole mass, but the grades of difference in feeling were as many as the minds in which they ruled. There were many, no doubt, who were merely moved with a transient emotion.

They had seen the death agonies of a remarkable Man, and the attendant wonders had persuaded them that He was something more than an ordinary being, and therefore they were afraid. With a kind of indefinite fear, grounded upon no very intelligent reasoning, they were alarmed because God was angry and had closed the eye of day upon them and made the rocks to split. Burdened with this indistinct fear, they went their way trembling and humbled to their homes. But perhaps before the next morning light had dawned they had forgotten it all and the next day found them greedy for another bloody spectacle and ready to nail another Christ to the cross, if there had been such another to be found in the land.

Their beating of the breast was not a breaking of the heart. It was an April shower, a dewdrop of the morning, a hoar-frost that dissolved when the sun had risen. Like a shadow the emotion crossed their minds and like a shadow it left no trace behind. How often, in the preaching of the Cross, has this been the only result in tens of thousands! In this house, where so many souls have been converted, many more have shed tears which have been wiped away and the reason of their tears has been forgotten. A handkerchief has dried up their emotions. Alas! Alas, that while it may be difficult to move men with the story of the Cross to weeping, it is even more difficult to make those emotions permanent.

I have seen something amazing, this morning, said one who had listened to a faithful and earnest preacher, I have seen a whole congregation in tears. Alas! said the preacher, there is something more amazing still, for the most of them will go their way to forget that they ever shed a tear. Ah, my Hearers, shall it be always soalways so? Then, O you impenitent, there shall come to your eyes a tear which shall drip forevera scalding drop which no mercy shall ever wipe awaya thirst that shall never be abated! There shall come to you a worm that shall never die and a fire that never shall be quenched! By the love you bear your souls, I pray you escape from the wrath to come!

Others among that great crowd exhibited emotion based upon more thoughtful reflection. They saw that they had shared in the murder of an innocent Person. Alas, they said, we see through it all now. That Man was no offender. In all that we have ever heard or seen of Him, He did good and only good! He always healed the sick, fed the hungry and raised the dead. There is not a word of all His teaching that is really contrary to the Law of God. He was a pure and holy Man. We have all been duped. Those priests have egged us on to put to death One whom it were a thousand mercies if we could restore to life again at once. Our race has killed its Benefactor.

Yes, says one, I thrust out my tongue. I found it almost impossible to restrain myself when everybody else was laughing and mocking at His tortures. But I am afraid I have mocked at the innocent, and I tremble lest the darkness which God has sent was His reprobation of my wickedness in oppressing the innocent. Such feelings would abide, but I can suppose that they might not bring men to sincere repentancefor while they might feel sorry that they had oppressed the innocentyet, perceiving nothing more in Jesus than mere evil-treated virtue and suffering manhood, the natural emotion might soon pass away and the moral and spiritual result be of no great value.

How frequently have we seen in our hearers that same description of emotion! They have regretted that Christ should be put to death. They have felt like that old king of France, who said, I wish I had been there with 10,000 of my soldiersI would have cut their throats sooner than they should have touched Him. But those very feelings have been evidence that they did not feel their share in the guilt as they ought to have done and that to them the Cross of Jesus was no more a saving spectacle than the death of a common martyr. Dear Hearers, beware of making the Cross to be a commonplace thing with you! Look beyond the sufferings of the innocent Manhood of Jesus and see upon the Cross the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, or else you look to the Cross in vain.

No doubt there were a few in the crowd who smote upon their breasts because they felt, We have put to death a Prophet of God. As of old our nation slew Isaiah and put to death others of the Masters servants, so today they have nailed to the Cross one of the last of the Prophets and His blood will be upon us and upon our children. Perhaps some of them said, This man claimed to be Messiah and the miracles which attended His death prove that He was so. His life betokens it and His death declares it. What will become of our nation if we have slain the Prince of Peace? How will God visit us if we have put His Prophet to death!

Such mourning was in advance of other forms. It showed a deeper thought and a clearer knowledge and it may have been an admirable preparation for the later hearing of the Gospelbut it would not of itself suffice as evidence of Grace. I shall be glad if my hearers in this house today are persuaded by the Character of Christ that He must have been a Prophet sent of God and that He was the Messiah promised of old. And I shall be gratified if they, therefore, lament the shameful cruelties which He received from our apostate race. Such emotions of compunction and pity are most commendable and under Gods blessing they may prove to be the furrows of your heart in which the Gospel may take root. He who thus was cruelly put to death was God over all blessed forever, the worlds Redeemer and the Savior of such as put their trust in Him! May you accept Him today as your Deliverer and so be saved, for if not, the most virtuous regrets concerning His deathhowever much they may indicate your enlightenmentwill not manifest your true conversion.

In the motley company who all went home striking their breasts, let us hope that there were some who said, Certainly this was the Son of God, and mourned to think He should have suffered for their transgressions and been put to grief for their iniquities. Those who came to that point were saved! Blessed were the eyes that looked upon the slaughtered Lamb in such a way as that and happy were the hearts that then and there were broken because He was bruised and put to grief for their sakes. Beloved, aspire to this! May Gods Grace bring you to see in Jesus Christ no other than God made flesh, hanging upon the Cross in agony to die, the Just for the unjust, that we may be saved!

O come and repose your trust in Him and then strike upon your breasts at the thought that such a Victim should have been necessary for your redemption! Then may you cease to strike your breasts and begin to clap your hands for very joyfor they who thus bewail a Savior may rejoice in Himfor He is theirs and they are His!

II. We shall now ask you To JOIN IN THE LAMENTATION, each man according to his sincerity of heart, beholding the Cross and striking upon his breast. We will by faith put ourselves at the foot of the little knoll of Calvary. There we see in the center, between two thieves, the Son of God made flesh, nailed by His hands and feet and dying in an anguish which words cannot portray. Look well, I pray you. Look steadfastly and devoutly, gazing through your tears. Tis He who was worshipped of angels who is now dying for the sons of men!

Sit down and watch the death of Deaths Destroyer! I shall ask you first to strike your breasts, as you remember that you see in Him your own sins. How great He is! That crown of thorns is on the head once crowned with all the royalties of Heaven and earth! He who dies there is no common man! King of kings and Lord of lords is He who hangs on yonder Cross. Then see the greatness of your sins which required so vast a Sacrifice. They must be infinite sins to require an infinite Person to lay down His life in order to their removal. You can never compass or comprehend the greatness of your Lord in His essential Character and dignity. Neither shall you ever be able to understand the blackness and heinousness of the sin which demanded His

life as an Atonement.

Brothers and Sisters, strike your breast and say, God be merciful to me, the greatest of sinners, for I am such. Look well into the face of Jesus and see how vile they have made Him! They have stained those cheeks with spit! They have lashed those shoulders with a felons scourge! They have put Him to the death which was only awarded to the meanest Roman slave! They have hung Him up between Heaven and earth as though He were fit for neither! They have stripped Him naked and left Him not a rag to cover Him!

See here, then, O Believer, the shame of your sins! What a shameful thing your sins must have been. What a disgraceful and abominable thing, if Christ must be made such a shame for you! O be ashamed of yourself, to think your Lord should thus be scorned and made nothing of for you! See how they aggravate His sorrows! It was not enough to crucify Himthey must insult Him! Nor that enough, they must mock His prayers and turn His dying cries into themes for jest while they offer Him vinegar to drink. See, Beloved, how aggravated were your sins and mine!

Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let us all strike upon our breasts and say, Oh, how our sins have piled up their guiltiness! It was not merely that we broke the Law, but we sinned against light and knowledge. We sinned against rebukes and warnings. As His griefs are aggravated, even so are our sins! Look still into His dear face and see the lines of anguish which indicate the deeper inward sorrow which far transcends mere bodily pain and suffering. God, His Father, has forsaken Him! God has made Him a curse for us.

Then what must the curse of God have been against us? What must our sins have deserved? If when sin was only imputed to Christ and laid upon Him for awhile, His father turned His head away and made His Son cry out, Lama Sabachthani! Oh, what an accursed thing our sin must be and what a curse would have come upon us! What thunderbolts, what coals of fire, what indignation and wrath from the Most High must have been our portion had not Jesus interposed! If Jehovah did not spare His Son, how little would He have spared guilty, worthless men if He had dealt with us after our sins and rewarded us according to our iniquities!

As we still sit down and look at Jesus, we remember that His death was voluntaryHe need not have died unless He had so willed. Here, then, is another striking feature of our sin, for our sin was voluntary, too. We did not sin as of compulsion, but we deliberately chose the evil way. O Sinner, let both of us sit down together and tell the Lord that we have no justification, or extenuation, or excuse to offerwe have sinned willfully against light and knowledge, against love and mercy. Let us strike upon our breasts, as we see Jesus willingly suffer and confess that we have willingly offended against the just and righteous Laws of a most good and gracious God.

I could gladly keep you looking into those five wounds and studying that marred face and counting every purple drop that flowed from hands and feet and side, but time would fail us. Only that one woundlet it abide with youstrike your breast because you see in Christ your sin. Looking againchanging, as it were, our standpoint, but still keeping our eye upon that same, dear Crucified One, let us see there the neglected and despised remedy for our sin. If sin itself, in its first condition, as rebellion, brings no tears to our eyes, it certainly ought, in its second manifestation, as ingratitude.

The sin of rebellion is vile. But the sin of slighting the Savior is viler still. He that hangs on the Cross in groans and griefs unutterable, is He whom some of you have never thought ofwhom you do not love, to whom you never prayin whom you place no confidence and whom you never serve. I will not accuse you. I will ask those dear wounds to do it, sweetly and tenderly. I will rather accuse myself, for, alas! Alas, there was a time when I heard of Him as with a deaf ear! There was a time when I was told of Him and understood the love He bore to sinners and yet my heart was like a stone within me and would not be moved! I stopped my ears and would not be charmed, even with such a master fascination as the disinterested love of Jesus!

I think if I had been spared to live the life of an ungodly man for 30, 40, or 50 years and had been converted at last, I should never have been able to blame myself sufficiently for rejecting Jesus during all those years. Why, even those of us who were converted in our youth and almost in our childhood cannot help blaming ourselves to think that so dear a Friend who had done so much for us, was so long slighted by us! Who could have done more for us than He, since He gave Himself for our sins? Ah, how we did wrong Him while we withheld our hearts from Him! O Sinners, how can you keep the doors of your hearts shut against the Friend of Sinners? How can we close the door against Him who cries, My head is wet with dew and My locks with the drops of the night: open to Me, my Beloved, open to Me?

I am persuaded there are some here who are His electyou were chosen by Him from before the foundation of the world and you shall be with Him in Heaven one day to sing His praises and yet, at this moment, though you hear His name, you do not love Him. And though you are told of what He did, you do not trust Him. What? Shall that iron bar always fast close the gate of your heart? Shall that door be always bolted? O Spirit of the living God, win an entrance for the blessed Christ this morning! If anything can do it, surely it must be a sight of the Crucified Christthat matchless spectacle shall make a heart of stone relent and meltsubdued by Jesus love! O may the Holy Spirit work this gracious melting, and He shall have all the honor!

Still keeping you at the foot of the Cross, dear Friends, every Believer here may well strike upon his breast this morning as he thinks of who it was that smarted so upon the Cross. Who was it? It was He who loved us before the world was made! It was He who is this day the Bridegroom of our souls, our Best-Beloved. He who has taken us into the banqueting house and waved His banner of love over us. It is He who has made us one with Himself, and has vowed to present us to His Father without spot. It is He, our Husband, our Ishi, who has called us His Hephzibah because His soul delights in us. It is He who suffered thus for us.

Suffering does not always excite the same degree of pity. You must know something of the individual before the innermost depths of the soul are stirred, and so it happens to us that the higher the character and the more able we are to appreciate it, the closer the relation and the more fondly we reciprocate the lovethe more deeply does suffering strike the soul. You are coming to His Table, some of you, today, and you will partake of breadI pray you remember that it represents the quivering flesh that was filled with pain on Calvary! You will sip of that cupthen be sure to remember that it betokens to you the blood of One who loves you better than you could be loved by mother, or by husband, or by friend!

O sit down and strike your breasts that He should grieve! That heavens Sun should be eclipsed! That Heavens Lily should be spotted with blood and Heavens Rose should be whitened with a deadly pallor! Lament that Perfection should be accused, Innocence struck and Love murderedand that Christ, the happy and the holy, the ever blessed, who had been for ages the delight of angelsshould now become the sorrowful, the acquaintance of grief, the bleeding and the dying! Smite upon your breasts, Believers and go your way! Beloved in the Lord, if such grief as this should be kindled in you, it will be well to pursue the subject and to reflect upon how unbelieving and how cruel we have been to Jesus since the day that we have known Him.

What? Does He bleed for me and have I doubted Him? Is He the Son of God and have I suspected His fidelity? Have I stood at the foot of the Cross unmoved? Have I spoken of my dying Lord in a cold, indifferent spirit? Have I ever preached Christ Crucified with a dry eye and a heart unmoved? Do I bow my knee in private prayer and are my thoughts wandering when they ought to be bound hand and foot to His dear bleeding self? Am I accustomed to turn over the pages of the Evangelists which record my Masters wondrous Sacrifice and have I never stained those pages with my tears? Have I never paused spellbound over the sacred sentence which recorded this miracle of miracles, this marvel of marvels?

Oh, shame upon you, hard Heart! Well may I strike you! May God strike you with the hammer of His Spirit and break you to shivers! O you stony Heart, you granite Soul, you flinty spiritwell may I strike the breast which harbors you, to think that I should be so doltish in the presence of love so amazing, so Divine! Brethren, you may strike upon your breasts as you look at the Cross and mourn that you should have done so little for your Lord. I think if anybody could have sketched my future life in the day of my conversion and have said, You will be dull and cold in spiritual things and you will exhibit but little earnestness and little gratitude! I should have said, like Hazael, Is your servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?

I suppose I read your hearts when I say that the most of you are disappointed with your own conduct as compared with your too-flattering prophecies of yourselves! What? Am I really pardoned? Am I in very deed washed in that warm stream which gushed from the riven side of Jesus, and yet am I not wholly consecrated to Christ? What? In my body do I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus and can I live almost without a thought of Him? Am I plucked like a brand from the burning and have I small care to win others from the wrath to come? Has Jesus stooped to win me and do I not labor to win others for Him? Was He all in earnest about me and am I only half in earnest about Him? Dare I waste a minute, dare I trifle away an hour? Have I an evening to spend in vain gossip and idle frivolities?

O my Heart, well may I strike you, that at the sight of the death of the dear Lover of my soul, I should not be fired by the highest zeal and be impelled by the most ardent love to a perfect consecration of every power of my nature, every affection of my spirit, every faculty of my whole man! This mournful strain might be pursued to far greater lengths. We might follow up our confessions, still striking, still accusing, still regretting, still bewailing. We might continue upon the bass notes evermore and yet might we not express sufficient contrition for the shameful manner in which we have treated our blessed Friend. We might say with one of our hymn writers

*Lord, let me weep for nothing but sin,   
And after none but You.   
And then I wouldO that I might   
A constant weeper be!*

One might desire to become a Niobe and realize the desire of Jeremy, O that my head were waters. Even the holy extravagance of George Herbert does not surprise us, for we would even sing with him the song of GRIEF

*Oh, who will give me tears?   
Come, all you springs,   
Dwell in my head and eyes!   
Come, clouds and rain!   
My grief has need of all   
The watery things   
That nature has produced.   
Let every vein   
Suck up a river to supply my eyes,   
My weary weeping eyes, too dry for me,   
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies To bear them out and with my state agree. What are two shallow fords, two little spouts Of a less world?   
The greater is but small.   
A narrow cupboard for my griefs and doubts, Which need provision in the midst of all.   
Verses, you are too fine a thing, too wise,   
For my rough sorrows.   
Cease! Be dumb and mute.   
Give up your feet and running to my eyes, And keep your measures for some lovers lute, Whose grief allows him music and a rhyme For mine excludes both measure, tune and time, Alas, my God!*

III. Having, perhaps, said enough on this pointenough if God blesses ittoo much if without His blessinglet me invite you, in the third place, to remember that AT CALVARY, DOLOROUS NOTES ARE NOT THE ONLY SUITABLE MUSIC. We admired our poet when, in the hymn which we have just sung, he appears to question with himself which would be the most fitting tune for Golgotha. It is finishedshall we raise songs of sorrow or of praise? Mourn to see the Savior die, or proclaim His victory?

*If of Calvary we tell,   
How can songs of triumph swell!   
If of man redeemed from woe,   
How shall notes of mourning flow?*

He shows that since our sin pierced the side of Jesus, there is cause for unlimited lamentation, but since the blood which flowed from the wound has cleansed our sin, there is ground for unbounded thanksgiving! And, therefore, the poet, after having balanced the matter in a few verses, concludes with

*It is finished, let us raise Songs of thankfulness and praise.*

After all, you and I are not in the same condition as the multitude who had surrounded Calvaryfor at that time our Lord was still deadnow He is risen, indeed! There were yet three days from that Thursday evening (for there is much reason to believe that our Lord was not crucified on Friday), in which Jesus must dwell in the regions of the dead. Our Lord, therefore, so far as human eyes could see Him, was a proper object of pity and mourning and not of thanksgiving.

But now, Beloved, He ever lives and gloriously reigns! No grave confines that blessed body! He saw no corruption, for the moment when the third day dawned, He could no longer be held with the bonds of death, but He manifested Himself alive unto His disciples! He tarried in this world for 40 days. Some of His time was spent with those who knew Him in the flesh. Perhaps a larger part of it was passed with those saints who came out of their graves after His Resurrection, but certain it is that He is gone up, as the first-fruit from the dead. He is gone up to the right hand of God, even the Father!

Do not bewail those woundsthey are lustrous with supernal splendor! Do not lament His deathHe lives no more to die! Do not mourn that shame and spitting

*The head that once was crowned with thorns,*

*Is crowned with glory now.*   
Look up and thank God that death has no more dominion over Him. He ever lives to make intercession for us and He shall shortly come with angelic bands surrounding Him to judge the quick and the dead. The argument for joy overshadows the reason for sorrow! Like as a woman when the child is born remembers no more her anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world, so, in the thought of the risen Savior who has taken possession of His crown, we will forget the lamentation of the Cross and the sorrows of the broken heart of Calvary.

Moreover, hear the shrill voice of the high sounding cymbals and let your hearts rejoice within you, for in His death our Redeemer conquered all the hosts of Hell. They came against Him furiously, yes, they came against Him to eat up His flesh, but they stumbled and fell. They compassed Him about, yes, they compassed Him about like bees, but in the name of the Lord did the Champion destroy them! Against the whole multitude of sins and all the battalions of the Pit, the Savior stood, a solitary soldier fighting against innumerable bands but He has slain them all! Bruised is the dragons head. Jesus has led captivity captive! He conquered when He fell! And let the notes of victory drown forever the cries of sorrow!

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, let it be remembered that men have been saved! Let there stream before your gladdened eyes this morning the innumerable company of the elect. Robed in white they come in long processionthey come from distant lands, from every clime. They were once scarlet with sin and black with iniquitythey are now all white and pure, and without spot before the Throne forever. They are beyond temptation, beatified and made like Jesus! And how? It was all through Calvary. There was their sin put away! There was their everlasting righteousness brought in and consummated! Let the hosts that are before the Throne, as they wave their palms and touch their golden harps, excite you to a joy like their own and let that celestial music hush the gentler voices which mournfully exclaim

*Alas, and did my Savior bleed?   
And did my Sovereign die?   
Would He devote that sacred head   
For such a worm as I?*

Nor is that all. You yourself are saved! O Brother! This will always be one of your greatest joys, that others are converted through your instrumentality! This is occasion for much thanksgiving, but your Saviors advice to you is, Notwithstanding in this, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven. You, a spirit meet to be cast away! You whose portion must have been with devilsyou are this day forgiven, adopted, saved, on the road to Heaven! Oh, while you think that you are saved from Hell, that you are lifted up to Glory, you cannot but rejoice that your sin is put away from you through the death of Jesus Christ, your Lord!

Lastly, there is one thing for which we ought always to remember with joy, Christs death, and that is that although the crucifixion of Jesus was intended to be a blow at the honor and glory of our Godthough in the death of Christ the world did, so far as it was able, put God Himself to death and so earn for itself that hideous title, a deicidal world, yet never did God have such honor and glory as He obtained through the sufferings of Jesus! Oh, they thought to scorn Him, but they lifted His name on high!

They thought that God was dishonored when He was most glorified! The image of the Invisible, had they not marred it? The express image of the Fathers Person, had they not defiled it? Ah, so they said! But He that sits in the heavens may well laugh and have them in derision, for what did they do?! They did but break the alabaster box and all the blessed drops of infinite mercy streamed forth to perfume all worlds! They did but rend the veil and then the Glory which had been hidden between the cherubim shone forth upon all lands!

O Nature, adoring God with your ancient and priestly mountains, extolling Him with your trees which clap their hands, and worshipping with your seas which, in their fullness, roar out Jehovahs praise! With all your tempests and flames of fire, your dragons and your deeps, your snow and your hailyou cannot glorify God as Jesus glorified Him when He became obedient unto death! O Heaven, with all your jubilant angels, your everchanting cherubim and seraphim, your thrice holy hymns, your streets of gold and endless harmoniesyou cannot reveal the Deity as Jesus Christ revealed it on the Cross!

O Hell, with all your infinite horrors and flames unquenchable and pains and griefs and shrieks of tortured ghosts! Even you cannot reveal the Justice of God as Christ revealed it in His riven heart upon the bloody Cross! O earth and Heaven and Hell! O time and eternity, things present and things to come, visible and invisibleyou are dim mirrors of the Godhead compared with the bleeding Lamb! O heart of God, I see you nowhere as at Golgotha, where the Word Incarnate reveals the justice and the love, the holiness and the tenderness of God in one blaze of Glory! If any created mind would gladly see the Glory of God, he need not gaze upon the starry skies, nor soar into the Heaven of heavens! He has but to bow at the foot of the Cross and watch the crimson streams which gush from Emmanuels wounds!

If you would behold the Glory of God, you need not gaze between the gates of pearls! You have but to look beyond the gates of Jerusalem and see the Prince of Peace expire! If you would receive the most noble conception that ever filled the human mind of the loving kindness and the greatness and the pity, and yet the justice and the severity and the wrath of God, you need not lift up your eyes, nor cast them down, nor look to Paradise, nor gaze on Tophetyou have but to look into the heart of Christ all crushed and broken and bruised and you have seen it all!

Oh, the joy that springs from the fact that God has triumphed after all! Death is not the victor! Evil is not master! There are not two rival kingdoms, one governed by the God of good and the other by the god of evil no, evil is bound, chained and led captive! Its sinews are cut, its head is broken! Its king is bound to the dread chariot of Jehovah-Jesus, and as the white horses of triumph drag the Conqueror up the everlasting hills in splendor of glory, the monsters of the Pit cringe at His chariot wheels!

Therefore, Beloved, we close this discourse with this sentence of humble yet joyful worship, Glory be unto 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.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 23:27-56.*  
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A TIMELY EXPOSTULATION   
NO. 3397

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 1914. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
Why seek you the living among the dead   
Luke 24:5.

This question was addressed to certain holy women who came early to the sepulcher, bringing with them the spices which they had prepared for embalming the body of our Lord. They were met by angels who reminded them that their Lord had promised to rise again, that He had so risen and that it was in vain for them to seek in the sepulcher the living, the Immortal Christ. Why seek you the living among the dead?

The mistake they made was that of seeking for the living Savior where He could not be found. We have, all of us, made the same mistake. Some of us are making it now. We are seeking good things in the midst of evil hoping to find satisfaction where it was never yet discovered and never will be! Seeking, but seeking in the wrong placeseeking for the living among the dead.

To illustrate this, I shall first address myself to the people of God who sometimes fall into this error. And then I shall have to expostulate with the unconverted, as well as with those who are somewhat awakened to spiritual Truth. Say, now

I. YOU CHILDREN OF GOD, CALLED OUT FROM THE WORLD, do you not sometimes set your affections upon things on the earth and seek for satisfaction here below? Have I not observed how some of you have tried to find comfort in your wealth and how others, in the midst of your successful efforts to extend your business, have thought to find solace on that bed of thorns, the cares of this world and the merchandise thereof? Ah, how grievous it is when the Christian becomes an idolater! Yet just as the Israelites of oldwho, though they knew the true God, were found in an emergency setting up the golden calf and saying, These are your gods, O Israelso, in one form or another, we may be making some created good the object of our search, setting our heart upon it and indulging expectations of solace from itforgetting that comfort can only be found in our Lord Jesus Christ! Why seek youwhy do you who know so much betterwhy seek YOU the living among the dead? Why do you come to the broken cistern which can hold no water, when the well springing up with crystal streams is always at your feet? Why will you go to drink of the muddy river, the Sihor, when the clear sparkling rill of the Water of Life is always accessible to you? You did once try to fill your belly with the husks which the swine eat, but you failed to appease the hunger that consumed you. Why return to that unprofitable employment? Oh, Christian, you have sometimes said to your fellow man, Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfies not? I may say the same to you, if you think an immortal mind can be satisfied with mortal joys, or imagine that one who has been born from on high can ever find contentment in this poor wilderness world! The pursuit itself is a folly which is sure to bring you a strong rebuke whenever you thus fall into the error of seeking the living among the dead. Your solid comfort, your real happiness and the only joy worth havingyou must find in Christ Jesus, by the power of the Spiritand not in the things of time.

It is sadder, still, and this sometimes occurs when the professor tries to cheer his heart by the silly vanities of worldly amusement. There are a thousand inlets to happiness which you may look upon as free to your useyou are as welcome to enjoy them as other men. Whatever it is that is pure and lovely and uncorrupted with sin is as much yours as it is the portion of any other people under the sun. Yours are the beauties of Nature, the wonders of Gods handiwork and the vast domain of Creation wherein are things innumerable to please the eye, to charm the ear and make the heart to heave with joy! Learn to use without abusing the bounties which Providence has placed within your reach! And pray that the delights they are capable of yielding may be sanctified to your good. But there are sundry amusements, so frivolous and trifling, that if they are not, in themselves sinful, they verge upon that border where diversion is separated from dissipation by only a faint line. And as the border is always the most infested by thieves and robbers, it is well to beware of it. If the Christian wants to be clear from open transgression, let him eschew the place of temptation and avoid the appearance of evilfor whatever is not of faith is sin. What you cannot do with a clear conscience that it is right, let that alone with a wholesome fear of offense. You can peril no mistake by leaving it! You may cause yourself a thousand sorrows by entering upon it. Oh, shall you that have once leaned your heads upon the bosom of Christ profane your hearts with this wanton wicked world? Shall you that have once eaten angels food hanker after the diet of fools and drink the intoxicating wine cup of their pleasures? Shall you be seen in the assembly where none congregate but the lightest of the light, and the gayest of the gay? Shame upon you, Christian! You have disgraced your profession. You have disgraced yourself. You are seeking the living, not only among the dead, but among the rotten and corrupt! Do you expect cheer for your passions? You shall find a scourge for your soul! If you are a child of God, you shall be driven back to the way you have strayed from with many a smarting sore and many a broken bone! If you are not a child of God, likely enough you will go from bad to worse, give up the profession which was but a vapor, and turn as a dog to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire! Thus, Christian, while I say to you, do not seek lasting comfort in earthly things, I am compelled to say to some who bear the name and wear the profession of Christiansdo not seek your joy at all among the unprofitable sports and gambols in which some men delight! It is seeking the living among the dead!

Further, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, there is an evil very common to the most conscientious of those who avoid all forms of outward sin. It is the insidious evil of seeking comfort when they are full of doubts and fears, by looking within yourselves. I should think that experience might have cured us of this, for when we look into our own heartsalthough I trust the Grace of God is thereso much of imperfection, of infirmity, yes, and what is worse, of real iniquity is apparent, that a sight of the inner man is anything but likely to inspire us with consolation. What a fool is he who tries to fetch fire out of ice! But he is not much more foolish than those who try to soothe their anxieties by parleying with their feelings. Brothers and Sisters, the Christians comfort is on the Cross. There hangs his hope! His hope must not be based or bottomed on anything he feels. It is pleasant to know that Grace reigns in ones breast. Be thankful for it. But, alas, if that is your confidence, the next day you may doubt whether there is any Grace within! And where, then, is your confidence? It is gone! It flees as a shadow. If, however, you live depending upon the Cross of Jesus, you can walk with equable comfort at all times, for the Cross never shifts its place, the Atonement never fluctuates, it never rises or falls in value! Our union with Christ is not subject to degrees. We are always in Him accepted in the Beloved. Happy is the man who builds on that solid Rock and not upon the treacherous quicksands of his own personal emotions! If you endeavor to draw comfort from your fickle, changeable feelings, you seek for the living among the dead. You are looking for joy where it can never be found. You will gather the thorn, but not the rose. You will endure the labor, but not receive the reward. You will suffer the burning of the fire, but not be enlivened by its cheerful warmth. Why seek you the living among the dead?

When the Believer feels that Grace is at a very low ebb with him, let him take care that he does not resort to Sinai for the refreshment of his evidences. Have you not heard of some Believers whose mournful sonnet has been

*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?*

And in order to get out of that state they have said, Now I will make a Covenant with God. I will chasten myself with fasting and much prayer. Or they have had recourse to vows of their own devising, instead of going straight away to Christ as sinnerswith some such language on their lips as our hymn suggests

*Just as I am, though tossed about,   
With many a conflict, many a doubt,   
Fighting within, and fears without,   
Oh, Lamb of God. I come!*

Instead of thus going to Christ, they set to work to be their own Savior! If Paul were here, he would say to them, O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the Truth? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect in the flesh? Beloved Brothers and Sisters, make your Covenant if you like, and fast if you please, and pray if you can without ceasingthe more you pray the better. But when a soul is hungry, it will not recover itself by bodily exercises, but by feeding! So what you need is not so much to give out something from yourselves as to get something into yourselves through Christ! And therefore, turn your eyes, as you did at the first, to the wounds, the glorious wounds, of your Substitute, and say to Him, My Lord, if I am not a saint, I am a sinner. If I am not saved, yet will I trust in You, now, even though I never did before. I now cast myself on You. This will revive you, this will comfort you! You may set to work as you please after that, but do not seek for the living among the dead! Do not go to Moses, who is dead and was buried years ago! Do not bring yourself under the spirit of bondage, but come as a child who is not under the Law, but under Graceand rest at the foot of the Cross! So shall you have your spiritual vigor restored and rejoice in the Lord your God!

Once more to the Believer. I do think, dear Friends, we seek for the living among the dead when we look to our fellow men to find in them some succor or support to depend upon, or when, as the case may vary, we look to our dear children or relatives and think to find a perpetuity of comfort there. Ah, and it is very easy for some of you to think too highly of the minister. It is possible when you have received spiritual quickening and have come to be fed under some godly pastor, that you may look no higher than the man, instead of looking to his Master! If so, if your faith stands in the wisdom of man, or in mans earnestnessyou are looking for the living among the dead! Oh, beware of anything like that! Let us be held in respect by you for our offices sake, but nothing beyond this do we crave or counsel. To the Lord Jesus we bid you look, for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christs sake! A more common evil, however, is for the wife to feel as if her husband could never be taken from her side. But he is mortal. I would not distress you with dreary forebodings, but I would have you remember that the living God is the only living One on whom your trust can be fixed. And you, Mother, do you think that your child can never be removed? Know, then, that you are in the land of the dying, and who are you, and what are you, that they should be beyond the reach of the arrows that fly abroad, and the diseases that work insidiously, any more than the children and the friends of others? Oh, if you begin to build your nest in these trees, which have, every one of them, been marked by the woodmans axeand must all come downyou are a silly bird, and your nest will be lost, and yourself suffer grievous damage! There is one Immortal Lover who shall never die! There is one Eternal Friend who shall never depart! There is a Father who always lives! There is a Brother who sticks close forever! Earthly kinshipsvalue them, but hold them loosely. Thank God for them, but think not that they are your freeholds. Your tenure is but on lease and a word shall suffice to terminate it! Walking through the fields, you might see most of them still yellow with the king-cups and blushing with all the flowers of this sweet summer month of June, but do not think these flowers shall long abide, for already I hear the sound of the sharpening scythe and I know the mowers will soon be at their taskthe flowers will be cut down and the green grass shall be dry. Set not, then, your love on the fleeting bounties of kindly Providence as though you could embalm them and make them last for years! For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. Fix your love on that which is constantnot on these transient things! I leave you, my Brothers and Sisters, with the general maximhaving applied it in various ways, you can apply it to many more in your meditationstake heed lest you seek for the living among the dead, and so spend your strength for nothing and reap the bitter fruits of weariness and disappointment! Are there not, however, among you, my Hearers, full many of

II. THOSE WHO ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD? As the Apostle said in that 10th Chapter of Romans which we just now read to you, They have not all obeyed the Gospel. I do not know whether the reading of that Chapter touched any of your hearts. It did mine. I could scarcely help weeping as I thought of some of you. They have not all obeyed the GospelI mean not all those who sit in these seats regularly, to whom we preach that Gospel so frequently. Those who come into our classes are earnestly taught, but they have not all obeyed the Gospel. No, there is a very large proportion who have not. Oh, grievous factfact which some of you will have to grieve over with terrible remorse in the Day of Judgment, unless the mercy of God prevents it! It is with you I want to expostulate. Some of you are seeking for joy in sin and you are seeking for the living among the dead, indeed!

Be thoughtful for a moment. God who made you has made certain laws, the observance of which is essential to your well-being. Suppose God had ordained that the violation of His law should make men happy, would that be wise? It is too unwise a thought for us to entertain, much less for God to design! You are disobeying Gods commandthen depend upon it that is the way of unhappiness! It must be so. Oh, you say, but it gives me present gratification. That may be. It is quite consistent with what I have said because the enchantment that allures you is the very snare that beguiles youand then for every ounce of joy which sin can yield to a sinful spirit, there will be a ton of sorrow inflicted! I forbear in this place to mention the sins of the flesh but who does not know that for every snap of pleasure derived from indulgence of the passions, there are racks, tortures and agonies which the physician could better explain than myself. Such a measure of retribution is common in this life, but as for the life to comecould you lift for a moment the thick veil that hides the unseen world from our gaze, or could a sound pierce through the partition that Infinite Mercy has made too stout for the wailing and gnashing of teeth to penetrateI think the groans, the execrations, the shrieks of madness of those who lived as votaries and died as victims of the so-called pleasure of sin would fill you with horror and wild amazement! The transgressor who eats the fruit of his own ways, fruit that once tempted his appetiteand drinks the dregs of that wine cup, the first sip of which was so sweet to his tasteis an appalling spectacle! And this is merely the awakening of a mans conscience to his folly. The punishment of avenging Justice is in reserve! Disobedience of God must be punished by God with indignation that does not relent and pain that knows no abatement! Why seek you, then, the living among the dead?

A moments reflection might convince a man that this final scene inevitably awaits the profligate. Who would think of making his child happy in the way of constant disobedience, or of encouraging his waywardness by rewarding it? You take care, as judicious parents, that your children shall know you govern the house. And if your laws are constantly broken, you exact the penalty and the rod is put into useor at least the chastisement is not spared. And shall not God stand up for His Sovereign prerogative, enforce His own Law and make men feel that they cannot violate that Law without suffering the retribution He has threatened? You shall find it so to your cost if you will not credit it to your escape! I tell you that if you seek your pleasure in the theater, or in the saloon of gaiety, or in what is infinitely worse, though too often in close associationin the house of shame. If you go to the chamber of the strange woman, or spend your evenings in the tavern, inflaming yourselves with strong drink, you court misery while you try to avoid melancholy! You render yourselves incapable of happiness while you strive to be merry! But ah, you might as well deliberately make a pilgrimage to the depths of Hell in quest of the joys of Heaven as to seek true enjoyment in the haunts of vice! The Lord, the Lord of Hosts will make men see that beneath the fair skin of the worlds pleasures there is a loathsome leprosy that would make them heart-sick were the latent corruption exposed! Oh, go not after such pleasures! Remember that God will require these things at your hands. Seek true pleasure, mental pleasure that never sours! Seek pure joy which will retain its fragrance, refresh others besides yourself, haunt you with no hideous ghosts, but bear sweet reflection when you come to die! Cheer your hearts with draughts from that goblet which will invigorate you when your souls pulse is beatingthe cup which flows clear to the last, whereof you may be grateful to sip when your immortal spirit is about to wing its fight to worlds unknown! Seek not for living pleasure amidst the graves and charnel houses of sin!

Let me change my tone again, for now I come to address a part of this company of people   
III. THOSE WHO ARE ANXIOUSLY CONCERNED TO BE FOUND RIGHT WITH GOD.   
Some of you, dear Friends, have known the evil of sin and have turned from its evil ways. But though you are desirous of being saved from the wrath to come, you are very likely seeking salvation where it is not to be obtained. A few counsels and cautions may, therefore, be welcome to you.  
Do not seek salvation by rites and ceremonies, for if you do, you are seeking for the living among the dead! The old Jewish religion was full of typeshence the forms and ceremonials that abounded in its observancebut it did not save multitudes who in the wilderness perished in their sins! And hundreds of thousands more, who had seen it all their lifetime, but never seen through its externals the realities it prefigured, died rejecting the Lord Jesus, to whose mediation it bears witness. Outward pomp and ceremony are of no avail to save the soul! Would those who are as fond of vestments and rituals try the experiment of endeavoring to heal a man who was sick by such means, they would find their medicines have no effect upon the body to restore its health. And were they to bring in a man who was sick in soul, they would soon find that all their gaudy trappings and rhythmical intonations were incapable of supplying balm to a wounded conscience! They are dead, Sirs. They are dead, every one of them! The whole thing is death! It is nothing in all its beauty but the festering fungus that grows upon corruption. The whole system is trickerya gewgaw to deceive. It is nothing but imposture, an artifice of Satan to lead the world astray! Were you baptized with water from the river Jordan, confirmed with never so much pomp and took the sacrament, or, as they say, went to celebration on every holy day and every unholy day likewiseand were you to expire with unction on your face and with the priests lying absolution in your earsyou would go down to Hell despite it all, if you had no truer faith, no brighter hope than these things could inspire! For other salvation is there none but that which you can find in Christ, without any priest to mediate, or any minister to intervene between you and Him. You are a priest, yourself, if you believe in Jesus. Christ is the one only Priest, the Great High Priest of our profession! Get pardon from Him and let other men buckle about their priesthood and vaunt their succession as they may. Beware of them! To resort to these men for help is to seek the living among the dead!

Or, perhaps, you will go about to work out your own salvation apart from Christ. You have got the idea that you must pass through so much experience, weep so many tears, get into such-and-such a state of heartand then that you must reform this habit and perform that serviceand after awhile you will be saved and obtain peace. The top and bottom of it is, you think you can save yourself! You would be your own Savior! Do you not know that every man, according to Gods own Word, every man is accursed who does not keep the whole Law, Cursed is everyone who continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them. Now, as you have not kept all things, you must be accursed! And as long as you abide under the Law, you are accursed in all that you do! If you can be delivered from the Law through Christ, then, and only then, may you escape from the curse, for Christ was made a curse for us by hanging upon the Cross for usand so the curse is put away and so we are redeemed there from. But so long as you are trying to be saved by your own works, you are under the Law. And so long as you are under the Law, you are under the curse. To try to find a blessing where everything is under Gods Law, is seeking for the living among the dead!  
I know not to whom these remarks may pointedly apply, but I dare say I am speaking to some of you who pant for salvation and you would give anything to be assured of your souls acceptance! You have been praying, it may be, night and day for mercy till your knees seem as though they would grow to the floor. In your earnest pleadings your heart has been vehement till the flesh has grown faint. I am glad that you are pleading and agonizing in prayer, but there is no necessity for these long delays and for these protracted prayers. Trust Christ, who hangs on yonder Cross, and you are saved! The moment you depend upon Jesus, past sin is blotted out, you are a new man as in the sight of God, your iniquity is forgiven, your transgression is covered and you are accepted in the Beloved! Hundreds of times have I tried to bring forward this theme till I sometimes fear lest it should sound flat and fail to awaken you! Yet some of you have not believed it or received it! Yet I bear you witness that if you receive not this cardinal Truth of God, you must perish in your sin! Our Lord did not mince matters. He offered no three courses, but He said, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. What about those that believe not? He said, He that believes not shall be damned. What if the man always goes to Church, or always comes to a meeting? There is no exemptionif he believe not, he shall be damned. But what if he always pays twenty shillings in the pound and is scrupulously honest? He that believes not shall be damned. The gentle lips of the Savior spoke these words! They are not of my coining, they are not my construction. He said it and will prove it true. Oh, that you might trust Him, for if you trust Him, you cannot be condemned! But if you go about anywhere else to find hope and comfort for your soul, you are seeking for the living among the dead! Why continue this foolish search? Why persevere in this bootless toil?   
Yet it is very possible you are seeking for some good thing in yourself by way of feeling and emotion. If I felt a more broken heart, says one, I could trust Christ. If, says another, I felt the terrors of the Law, I could trust Christ. If! Yes, indeed! Why multiply your useless ifs? They are vain excuses. Do you mean you cannot trust Christ? That is a sad, though, perhaps, it is an honest confession. Do you not believe Him to be true? Ah, says one, I do believe that. Is it difficult, then, to trust an honest man? But you do not believe in the integrity and faithfulness of Christ! Oh, you say, but I do. Well, then, trust Him as the necessary consequence! Jesus Christ says that He came into the world to save sinners. And Gods witness is that if we trust Christ, we shall be saved. If you believe that to be true, trust Him! Commit your soul and your souls salvation to Him! Oh, but I am not fit. Is there a word about fitness in the whole Gospel? As you may have come fresh from the commission of some new sin, the Gospel does not say to you, Stand by a while, till you are prepared. But it says, Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation. I do not find the Gospel telling you that you must first be better, but it is said that you are now to turn to Him. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Oh, I wish you could take my Master at His word! I wish, poor guilty One, you would have done with disputing, cling to the promises and just drop into the arms of the Promiser! Can you venture thus? You shall never chide yourself for temerity, or repent of your courage! It may seem a daring thing to do, but come, and welcome! Jesus casts out none that come!   
When I cameand it seems fresh in my memory tonight as I mention it to youI came all trembling in my sin. I knew I had not one good thing that could recommend me to Christ. I thought He would have said, Go your way, I have not loved you, nor given Myself for you. But I did look to Him. I knew I had no other confidence. I did cast myself upon Him and He has not cast me away. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. I cannot lead you to Christoh, that I could! There is One far mightier who can and I hope that He will do it tonight! We spoke this morning about the Holy Spirit. Oh, that the Holy Spirit might prove His own power to you now! At any rate, this I can say and this I do say Give up that seeking your own righteousness! Give up that struggling after emotions and feeling! It is all seeking the living among the dead! The idea of your helping Christ to save you is preposterous! What could you do? As well yoke a snail with a racehorse, that they might win a prize, as for you to help Christ! You, help Christ? You, with your rags and Christ with His white linen? You, with your pollution and Christ with His holiness? You, with your deep condemnation and Christ with His free forgiveness? He needs no help from you! He wants your emptiness, not your fullnessyour weakness, not your poweryour death, not your life! When a tree is loaded, it needs baskets, but it does not need full basketsit needs empty baskets to hold the fruit. And Jesus Christ wants sinnersnot sinners having meritsa foolish pretensebut sinners who are destitute! There is a full Christ for empty sinners, an allbountiful Christ for you, famished Sinner, now!   
Ah, some of you poor people drop in here, sometimes, on an evening, and I am glad to see you. Never be ashamed to come in your working clothes. I know you think I am not talking to you, but you are the very people I am speaking to! Jesus Christ always had a kind word for the laboring manCome unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Now, it is likely enough some of you are no better than you should be, though you have stepped in here in the crowd to hear a word. Well, it is such as you are, Christ came to save. Not the righteous. Sinners, Jesus came to save. Oh, you chief of sinners! Come to Jesus Christ! This night He will receive every soul that comes to Him. Eternal Spirit draw them! Eternal Father, now call them by Your power and let us meet at Your right hand, everyone of us, to see Your face and rejoice in Your mighty love!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 9:1-5; ROMANS 10.**

Verses 1-3. I tell the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I, myself, were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. The Apostle is evidently about to make an extraordinary statementa statement which would probably not be believed and, therefore, he gives as a preface the most solemn assertions that are permitted to Christian men declaring that he is speaking the truth, and also that the Holy Spirit is bearing witness with his conscience that it is sothat he so loves the souls of his fellow countrymen that, though the thing could never be, yet in a sort of ecstasy of love, he could devote himself to anything so long as his countrymen might but be saved. My kinsmen according to the flesh.

4, 5. Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises: Whose are the fathers and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God forever. Amen. The Apostle never omits an opportunity of magnifying his Master! Though it did not seem to be called for by the immediate subject in hand, yet he must put in a doxology to the name of Jesus. Who is over all the eternally blessed God forever. Amen. How any Believers in Scripture ever get to be disbelievers in the Deity of Christ is altogether astounding! If there is anything taught in the Word of God, it is assuredly that Paul comforts himself, in a measure, by the Doctrine of Election which is fully spoken to in this Chapter. My subject leads me to read again at the 10th Chapter.

**ROMANS 10.**   
Verse 1. Brethren my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. The same thing over againhis deep concern for his countrymen.

2. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Zeal is a good thing, but like the horse without a bit, it becomes useless and even dangerous. Knowledge is the bridle in the mouth of zeal. Zeal is like fire which may burn the house which it was intended to warm unless it is carefully governed. There must be knowledge in zeal.

3. For they being ignorant of Gods righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. This is a great evil in the present day. There are many persons who are evidently zealous for God, but they make a mistake in supposing that they are to be saved by their own works, their prayers, their Church attendance, their Chapel attendance, or something of the sort, instead of accepting the finished righteousness of Christ, which is the righteousness of God! They are insulting Christ. They are insulting God by thinking that He would have given His Son to be our Righteousness if we could have made a righteousness of our own, or given Him up to die, if we could save ourselves.

4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. There is the pointto believeto have faith. It is that which gives us the righteousness of which Christ is the sum total.

5. For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law. That the man which does those things shall live by them. And if any man did, or could keep the Law of God, he would live by itbut no man has ever done so, or ever will. There is no hope of life by the Law.

6-9. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not, in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what says it? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach: That 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. What a wondrous way of salvationso nearso close to us! What an expression that isin your mouth. We must absolutely take it out of our mouths. God has put the Bread of Life so near to us that it is in our mouth! We must reject it as a man would reject food, if we perish! But, oh, for Grace to receive it, to live upon it, to believe Christ, to trust Him and so to be saved!

10, 11. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed. If, then, I base my eternal salvation upon Christ, and am trusting in Himnot in my works, or prayers, or tears, or alms, or feelings, or even in my own repentance or faithbut wholly in Him, I shall never be ashamed!

12, 13. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. What a comforting text for some of you! You want salvation, but you are afraid you cannot find it. Whoeverwhat a grand wordwhoever shall call upon the name of the Lordthat is to say in prayer, but that prayer the prayer of faithhe shall be saved.

14. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? That is the pointthe believing is the vital matter!   
14, 15. And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. You see all the machinery of salvation here. God provides a Gospel, He sends a preacher to proclaim it, men hear itby the Holy Spirit they believe it and they are saved. It is all in a nutshell, but oh, how blessedly suited to poor, unworthy sinners like ourselves!  
16, 17. But they have not all obeyed the Gospel . For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. It does not ever come by seeing. Faith does not come by looking upon ceremoniesby gazing upon processions and pompous rituals! It come by the simple hearing of the Word of God. It is a matter of the understanding and the work of the Holy Spirit upon that understanding. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.   
18, 19. But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? Were they not taught that God would reject them if they were disbelievers? And that He would call in the heathen? Yes, they knew it, for   
19. First Moses says, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people and by a foolish nation I will anger you. And the heathen thus, like ourselves, were accounted dogs by the Jews, but the Lord has brought us in and made us to believe in Christ because they rejected Him! What a wonderful passage that is about the great supper which the King made, when we read, because the invited guests did not come, the King, being angry, said unto His servants, Go you out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in. Even the anger of God, you see, works good to some! He was angry with the guests that did not come, but then He called us in! His anger against the Jewish people has turned to the salvation of the Gentiles, for which may God be praised! But, may Israel be gathered, too!   
20, 21 But Isaiah is very bold, and says, I was found of them that sought Me not: I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He says, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1106 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LORD IS RISEN, INDEED   
NO. 1106

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 13, 1873, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee. Luke 24:5, 6.**

THE first day of the week commemorates the Resurrection of Christ and, following Apostolic example, we have made the first day of the week to be our Sabbath. Does not this intimate to us that the rest of our souls is to be found in the resurrection of our Savior? Is it not true that a clear understanding of the rising again of our Lord is, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the very surest means of bringing our minds into peace? To have a part in the Resurrection of Christ is to enjoy that Sabbath which remains for the people of God. We who have believed in the risen Lord do enter into rest, even as He also, Himself, is resting at the right hand of the Father. In Him we rest because His work is finished, His Resurrection being the pledge that He has perfected all that is necessary for the salvation of His people and we are complete in Him.

I trust, this morning, that some restful thoughts may, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be sown in the minds of Believers while we make a pilgrimage to the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and see the place where the Lord lay.

I. And, first, this morning, I will speak to you upon certain INSTRUCTIVE MEMORIES which gather around the place where Jesus slept with the rich in His death. Though He is not there, He assuredly once was there, for He was crucified, dead, and buried. He was as dead as the dead now are and though He could see no corruption, nor could be held by the bands of death beyond the predestined time, yet He was in very deed most assuredly dead. No light remained in His eyes, no life in His heart. Thought had fled from His thorn-crowned brow and speech from His golden mouth. He was not, in mere appearance, but in reality dead the spear-thrust decided that question once and for all.

Therefore in the sepulcher they laid Him, a dead Man, fit occupant of the silent tomb. Yet as He is not there now, but is risen, it is for us to search for memorials of His having been there. Not for the holy sepulcher will we contend with superstitious sectaries, but in spirit we will gather up the precious relics of the risen Redeemer. First, He has left in the grave the spices. When He rose He did not bring away the costly aromatics in which His body had been wrapped, but He left them there. Joseph brought about one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, and the odor remained. In the sweetest spiritual sense, our Lord Jesus has filled the grave with fragrance. It no longer smells of corruption and foul decay, but we can sing with the poet of the sanctuary

*Why should we tremble to convey   
These bodies to the tomb?   
There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,   
And left a long perfume.*

Yonder lowly bed in the earth is now perfumed with costly spices and decked with sweet flowers, for on its pillow the truest Friend we have once laid His holy head! We will not start back with horror from the chambers of the dead, for the Lord, Himself, has traversed themand where He goes no terror abides. The Master also left His grave clothes behind Him. He did not come from the tomb wrapped about with a winding-sheet. He did not wear the burial clothes of the tomb as the garments of life, but when Peter went into the sepulcher he saw the grave clothes lying carefully folded by themselves. What if I say He left them to be the hangings of the royal bedchamber wherein His saints fall asleep?

See how He has curtained our last bed! Our dormitory is no longer bare and drear, like a prison cell, but hung around with fair white linen and comely tapestrya chamber fit for the repose of princes of the blood! We will go to our last bedchamber in peace, because Christ has furnished it for us! Or if we change the metaphor, I may say that our Lord has left those grave clothes for us to look upon as pledges of His fellowship with us in our low estate and reminders that as He has cast aside the death garments, even so shall we. He has risen from His couch and left His sleeping robes behind Him in token that at our waking there are other vestures ready for us, also.

What if I again change the figure and say that as we have seen old tattered flags hung up in cathedrals and other national buildings as the memorials of defeated enemies and victories won, so in the crypt where Jesus vanquished death His grave clothes are hung up as the trophies of His victory over death, and as assurances to us that all His people shall be more than conquerors through Him that has loved them? O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? Then, carefully folded up and laid by itself, our Lord left the napkin that was about His head. Yonder lies that napkin now. The Lord needed it not when He came forth to life.

You who mourn may use it as a handkerchief with which to dry your eyes. You widows and you fatherless childrenyou mourning brothers and you weeping sistersand you, you Rachels, who will not be comforted because your children are not here, take this which wrapped your Saviors face and wipe your tears away forever! The Lord is risen, indeed, and therefore thus says the Lord, Refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for they shall come again from the land of the enemy. Your dead men shall live. O mournertogether with the Lords dead body shall they arise! Why, sorrow not as they that are without hope, for if you believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they, also, which sleep in Jesus will the Lord bring with Him!

What else has the risen Savior left behind Him? Our faith has learned to gather up memorials sweet from the couch of our Lords tranquil slumber. Well, Beloved, He left angels behind Him, and thus made the grave

*A cell where angels use*

*To come and go with heavenly news.*   
Angels were not in the tomb before, but, at His Resurrection, they descended! One rolled away the stone and others sat where the Body of Jesus had lain. They were the personal attendants and bodyguard of the Great Prince and, therefore, they attended Him at His rising, keeping the doorway and answering the enquiries of His friends. Angels are full of life and vigor, but they did not hesitate to assemble at the grave, gracing the Resurrection even as flowers adorn the spring!

I read not that our Master has ever recalled the angels from the sepulchers of His saints. And now, if Believers die as poor as Lazarus and as sick and as despised as he, angels shall convey their souls into the bosom of their Lord and their bodies, too, shall be watched by guardian spirits, as surely as Michael kept the body of Moses and contended for it with the foe. Angels are both the servitors of living saints and the custodians of their dust. What else did our Well-Beloved leave behind Him? He left an open passage from the tomb, for the stone was rolled awaydoorless is that house of death! We shall, in our turn, if the Master comes not speedily, descend into the prison of the grave. What did I say?I called it a prison, but how can it be a prisonit has no bolts or bars!

How can it be a prison, that has not even a door to close upon its occupants? Our Samson has pulled up the posts and carried away the gates of the grave with all their bars! The key is taken from the belt of Death and is held in the hands of the Prince of Life! The broken signal and the fainting watchmen are tokens that the dungeons of death can no more confine their captives! As Peter, when he was visited by the angel, found his chains fall off him and iron gates opened to him of their own accord, so shall the saints find ready escape at the resurrection morning! They shall sleep awhile, each one in his resting place, but they shall rise readily, for the stone is rolled away!

A mighty angel rolled away the stone, for it was very greatand when he had done the deed he sat down upon the stone. His garment was white as snow and his face like lightning. And as he sat on the stone he seemed to say to Death and Hell, Roll it back, again, if you can. Who shall rebuild for the tyrant his prison? The scepter lies broken that fell from his hands. His dominion is endedthe Lord is arisen! The helpless shall soon be released from their bands. One thing else I venture to mention as left by my Lord in His forsaken tomb. I visited, some few months ago, several of the large grave vaults which are to be found outside the gates of Rome.

You enter a large square building, sunk in the earth, and descend by many steps. And as you descend you observe on the four walls of the great chamber, innumerable little pigeonholes in which are the ashes of tens of thousands of departed persons. Usually in front of each compartment prepared for the reception of the ashes stands a lamp. I have seen hundreds, if not thousands, of these lamps, but they are all unlit and, indeed, do not appear ever to have carried light. They shed no ray upon the darkness of death. But now our Lord has gone into the tomb and illuminated it with His Presencethe lamp of His love is our guide through the gloom.

Jesus has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel! And now in the dovecotes where Christians nestle, there is lightyes, in every cemetery there is a light which shall burn through the watches of earths night till the day breaks and the shadows flee awayand the resurrection morn shall dawn! So, then, the empty tomb of the Savior leaves us many sweet reflections which we will treasure up for our instruction.

II. Our text expressly speaks of VAIN SEARCHESWhy seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! There are places where seekers after Jesus should not expect to find Him, however diligent may be their search, however sincere their desire. You cannot find a man where he is not, and there are some spots where Christ never will be discovered. At this present moment I see many searching for Christ among the monuments of ceremonialism, or what Paul called, the weak and beggarly elements, for they, observe days and months and times and years. Ever since our Lord arose, Judaism and every form of symbolic ceremony have become nothing better than sepulchers.

The types were of Gods own ordaining, but when the Substance had come, the types became empty sepulchers and nothing more. Since that time men have invented other symbols which have not the sanction of Divine authority and are only dead mens graves. At this present period the world has gone mad after its idols, deluded and deceived by those who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Surely there never was a period, even when Rome was most dominant, in which men heaped unto themselves ceremonies at such a rate as at the present day! They have made Christianity to be a greater yoke of bondage than was Judaism, itselfbut in vain shall any sincere and awakened soul hope to find Jesus among these vain performances!

You may stumble from one holy day to another, and from one holy place to another, and from one hocus-pocus to another, but you shall not find a Savior in any of them, for thus has He Himself declared, Neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem shall men worship the Father, but the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him. Jesus has torn the veil and abolished ceremonial worship and yet men seek to revive it, building up the sepulchers which the Lord has broken down. This day He repeats in our ears the warning, Take you 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.

Yet certain men among us go about to set up the altars which our godly forefathers broke down, and the work of Reformers and of Protestants must now be done over again! God send us a Knox or a Luther with a mighty hammer to break in pieces the idols which the priests of Baal are setting up! They seek the living among the dead! Jesus is not in their masses and processions! He is risen far above such carnal worship! If He were a dead Christ, such a worship might, perchance, be a suitable pageant over His tomb. But to one who always lives, it must be insulting to present such materialistic services!

Alas, there are many others who are seeking Christ as their Savior among the tombs of moral reformation! Our Lord likened the Pharisees to whitewashed sepulchersinwardly they were full of dead mens bones, but outwardly they were fairly garnished. Oh, the way in which men, when they get uneasy about their souls, try to whitewash themselves! Some one gross sin is given up, not in heart, but only in appearance, and a certain virtue is cultivated, not in the soul, but only in the outward actand thus they hope to be saved though they still remain enemies to God, lovers of sin and greedy seekers after the wages of unrighteousness! They hope that the clean outside of the cup and the platter will satisfy the Most High and that He will not be so severe as to look within and try their hearts.

O, Sirs, why do you seek the living among the dead? Many have sought peace for their consciences by their moral reformsbut if the Holy Spirit has truly convicted them of sinthey have soon found that they were looking for a living Christ amidst the tombs. He is not there, for He is risen! If Christ were dead, we might well say to you, Go and do your best to be your own saviors, but while Christ is alive, He needs no help of yoursHe will save you from top to bottom, or not at all. He will be Alpha and Omega to you and if you put your hands upon His work and think in any way that you can help Him, you have dishonored His holy nameand He will have nothing to do with you! Seek not a living salvation among the sepulchers of outward formality.

Too many, also, are struggling to find the living Christ amidst the tombs which cluster so thickly at the foot of Sinai. They look for life by the Law, whose ministry is death. Men think that they are to be saved by keeping Gods Commandments. They are to do their best and they conceive that their sincere endeavors will be acceptedand they will thus save themselves. This self-righteous idea is diametrically opposed to the whole spirit of the Gospel! The Gospel is not for you who can save yourselves, but for those who are lost! If you can save yourselves, go and do it, but do not mock the Savior with your hypocritical prayers! Go and stumble among the tombs of ancient Israel and perish as they did in the wilderness, for Moses and the Law can never lead you into rest.

The Gospel is for sinners who cannot keep the Law for themselves who have broken it and incurred its penalty! The Gospel is for those who know that they have done so and confess it. For such, a living Savior has come that He may blot out their transgressions. Seek not salvation by the works of the Law, for by them shall no flesh living be justified. By the Law is the knowledge of sin and nothing more! Righteousness, peace, life, salvation come by faith in the living Lord Jesus Christ and by no other means! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, but if you go about to establish your own righteousness, you shall surely perish because you have rejected the righteousness of Christ.

There are others who seek the living Jesus among the tombs by looking for something good in human naturein their own natural hearts and dispositions. I can see you now, for I have known you a long time and

this has always been your follyyou will go into the morgue of your own nature and say, Is Jesus here? Beloved, you are sad and depressed and I do not wonder. Look at yonder dry bones and bleaching skeletons. See that heap of rottenness, that mass of corruption, that body of deathcan you bear it? Ah, you say, I am a wretched man, indeed, but I long to find some good thing in my flesh!

O Beloved, you search in vain! You might as well rake Hell over to find Heaven in it as look into your own carnal nature to find consolation! Behold this day, God has abandoned the old nature and given it up to death. Under the old Law, circumcision was the putting away of the filth of the flesh, as though after this filth were gone the flesh might perhaps be bettered, but now, under the New Covenant, we have a far deeper symbol, for, know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we, also, should walk in newness of life. The old man is buried as a dead thing out of which no good can come. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin.

God does not attempt to renew the old carnal mind, but to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus. If any man continually practices introspeculation with a view to consolation, he might as well pile up blocks of Wenham ice with a view to burn down a city! If you are turning over your frames and feelings, your thoughts and imaginations, to discover comfort, you might far sooner hope to find precious diamonds in the sweepings of the roads. He is not here, says the whole of our old nature. He is not here, He is risen! And for consolation you must look alone to Him, as He is enthroned above the skies.

Yet again, too many have tried to find Christ amidst the gloomy catacombs of the worlds philosophy. For instance, on Sunday they like to have a sermon full of thoughtthought being, in the modern meaning of it, something beyond, if not opposite to, the simple teaching of the Bible. If a man tells his people what he finds in the Scriptures he is said to talk platitudes. But if a man amuses his people with his own dreams, however opposed they may be to Gods thoughts, he is a thinking man, a highly intellectual preacher. There are some who love, above all things, the maundering of daydreamers and the crudities of skeptics. If they can hear what an infidel Professor has said against Inspirationif they can be indulged with the last new blasphemysome hearers feel that they are making advances in that higher culture which is so much vaunted nowadays!

But, believe me, the bat-haunted caves of false philosophy and pretended science have been searched again and again, and salvation dwells not in them! In Pauls day there were Gnostics who tracked all the winding passages of vain-glorious learning, but they only discovered another gospel which was not another. The world by wisdom knew not God. After roaming amid the dreary catacombs of philosophy, we come back to breathe the fresh air of the living Word and concerning the mazes of science, we gasp out the sentenceHe is not there. Reason has not found Him in her deepest mining, nor speculation in her highest soaring, though, indeed, He is not far from any one of us! Athens has her unknown God, but in the simple Gospel God is known in the Person of Jesus.

Socrates and Plato hold up their candles, but Jesus is the soul. Our moderns quibble and dispute and yet a living Christ is among us converting sinners, cheering saints and glorifying God! If the Lord were a dead question for debate, philosophy might help us. But as He is a living power, a grain of faith in Him is better than mountains of philosophy. O you who know not the inner life and the quickening Spirit, what have you to do with the risen Lord? As well might corruptions world become the judge of cherubim as you become the arbiters of the Truth of God concerning Jesus our Lord!

How anxiously do I wish that you who have been searching for salvation in any of these directions would give up the hopeless task and understand that Christ is near youand if you, with the heart, believe on Him, and with the mouth confess Him, you shall be saved. Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside Me there is none else. This is His cry to you. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Jesus is still living and able to save to the uttermost! All you have to do is simply turn the glance of your faith towards Himby that faith He becomes yoursand you are saved! But oh, seek not the living among the dead, for He is risen!

III. We will again change our strain and consider, in the third place, UNSUITABLE ABODES. The angels said to the women, He is not here, but is risen! As much as to saysince He is alive He does not abide here. The living Christ might have sat down in the tombHe might have made the sepulcher His resting placebut it would not have been appropriate. And so He teaches us today that Christians should dwell in places appropriate to them. You are risen in Christyou ought not to dwell in the grave!

I shall now speak to those who, to all intents and purposes, live in the sepulcher though they are risen from the dead. Some of these are excellent people, but their temperament, and perhaps their mistaken convictions of duty, lead them to be perpetually gloomy and desponding. They hope they have believed in Christ, but they are not sure. They trust that they are saved, but they would not be presumptuous enough to say so. They do not dare to be happy in the conviction that they are accepted in the Beloved! They love the mournful string of the harp. They mourn an absent God. They hope that the Divine promises will be fulfilledthey trust that, perhaps, one of these days they may come forth into light and see a little of the brightness of the Lords lovebut now they are ready to quit, they dwell in the valley of the shadow of death and their soul is sorely burdened.

Dear Friend, do you think this is a proper condition for a Christian to be in? I am not going to deny your Christianity for a moment, for I have not half so much doubt about that as you have. I have a better opinion of

you than you have of yourself! The most trembling Believer in Jesus is saved and your little faith will save you. But do you really think that Christ meant you to stay where you are, sitting in the cold and silent tomb amid the dust and ashes? Why keep underground? Why not come into the Masters garden where the flowers are breathing perfume? Why not enjoy the fresh light of full assurance and the sweet breath of the Spirits comforting influences?

It was a madman who dwelt among the tombsdo not imitate him. Do not say I have been such a sinner that this is all I deserve to enjoy. If you talk of deserving, you have left the Gospel altogether. I know you believe in Jesus and you would not give up your hope for all the world. You feel, after all, that He is a precious Christ to you. Come, then, rejoice in Him though you cannot rejoice in yourself. Come, Beloved, come out of this dreary vault, leave it at once! Though you have lain among the pots, yet now you shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold. Your Master comes to you now and says, O My Dove, that are in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see your countenance, let Me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice, and your countenance is comely.

Members of the body of a risen Savior, will you still lie in the grave? Arise and come away! Doubt no longer! O Believer, what cause have you to doubt your God? Has He ever lied to you? Question no longer the power of the precious blood. Why should you doubt it? Is it not able to cleanse you from sin? No longer enquire as to whether you are saved or can beif you believe, you are as safe as Christ is! You can no more perish than Christ can if you are resting in HimHis word has pledged it, His honor is involved in itHe will surely bring you unto the promised rest! Therefore be glad. Why, I have known a Brother live down in the catacombs and vaults so long that he has condemned his Brethren for living in the sunlight, and has said, I cannot understand a man speaking so confidently, I cannot understand it.

My dear Brother, because you cannot understand it, it is not, therefore, wrong. There is a great deal about eagles that owls do not understand. You that are always fretting and worrying in that way are sinning against Godyou are grieving His Spirit! You are acting inconsistently with your Christian profession and yet you judge others who believe God to be true and take Him at His Word and therefore get joy and comfort out of His promise! Never do thatit would be wicked, indeed, for you to set yourselves up as judges. Instead, pray the Lord to lift up the light of His Countenance upon you, to give you joy and peace in believing, for this He says, Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, and shout for joy all you that are upright in heart. Come out of the tomb, dear Brothers and Sisters, for Jesus is not there and if He is not there why should you be? He is risen! O rise into comfort, too, in His Spirits power!

Another sort of people seem to dwell among the tombsI mean Christiansand I trust real Christians. They are very, very worldly. It is no sin for a man to be diligent in business, but it is a grievous fault when diligence in business destroys fervency in spiritand when there is no serving of God in daily life. A Christian man should be diligent so as to provide things honest in the sight of all men, but there are some who are not content with this. They have enough, but they covet more, and when they have more, they still stretch their arms like seas to grasp in all the shore. Their main thought is not God, but

goldnot Christ, but wealth.

O Brothers and Sisters, Brothers and Sisters, permit me earnestly to rebuke you lest you receive a severe rebuke in Providence in your own souls. Christ is not here! He dwells not in piles of silver. You may be very rich and yet not find Christ in it at alland you might be poor, and yet if Christ were with you, you would be happy as the angels. He is not here, He is risen! A marble tomb could not hold Him, nor could a golden tomb have contained Him. Let it not contain you! Unwrap the grave clothes of your heartcast all your cares on God who cares for you. Let your conversation be in Heaven. Set not your affection on things on the earth, but set it upon things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

Once more on this point, a subject more grievous stillthere are some professors who live in the house of sin. Yet they say that they are Christs people! No, I will not say they live in it, but they do what, perhaps, is worsethey go to sin to find their pleasures. I suppose we may judge of a man more by where he finds his pleasure than by almost anything else. A man may say, I do not habitually frequent the gaieties of the world. I am not always found where sin is mixed with mirth and where worldlings dance upon the verge of Hellbut I go there now and then for a special treat. I cannot help quoting the remark of Rowland Hill, who, when he met with a professor who went to the theatera member of his Church said to him, I understand you attend the theater. No, he said, I only go for a treat now and then.

Ah, said Mr. Hill, that makes it all the worse. Suppose that somebody said, Mr. Hill is a strong being, he eats carrion, and I am asked, Is it true, Mr. Hill, that you live on carrion? No, I do not habitually eat carrion, but I have a dish of it now and then just for a treat. Why, you would think I was nastier than I should have been if I had eaten it ordinarily. There is much force in the remark. If anything that verges on the unclean and lascivious is a treat to you, why then, your very heart is unclean and you are seeking your pleasure and comfort among the dead!

There are some things that men take pleasure in nowadays that are only fit to make idiots laugh, or else to cause angels to weep. Do be particular, Christian men and women, in your company. You are brothers to Christwill you consort with the sons of Belial? You are heirs of perfection in Christ. You are, even now, arrayed in spotless linen, and you are fair and lovely in the sight of Godyou are a royal priesthood, you are the elect of mankindwill you trail your garments in the mire and make yourselves the sport of the Philistines? Will you consort with the beggarly children of the world? No, act according to your pedigree and your newborn nature and never seek the living among the dead. Jesus was never therego not there yourselves. He loved not the noise and turmoil of the worlds pleasures. He had meat to eat of another kind. God grant you to

feel the resurrection life strong within your spirits.

IV. But I pass on from that. In the fourth place, I want to warn you against UNREASONABLE SERVICES. Those good people to whom the angels said, He is not here, but is risen! were bearing a load, and what were they carrying? What is Joanna carrying, and her servants? And Mary, what is she carrying? Why, white linenand what else? Pounds of spices, the most precious they could buy. What are they going to do? Ah, if an angel could laugh, I should think he must have smiled as he found they were coming to embalm Christ!

Why He is not here and, what is more, He is not dead! He does not need any embalming, He is alive! You might have seen all over England, on Good Friday, and also on this Easter Sunday, crowds of peopleI have no doubt very sincere peoplecoming to embalm Christ. They tolled a bell because He was dead and they hung crepe over what they call their altars because He was dead, and they fasted and sung sad hymns over their dead Savior! I bless the Lord my Redeemer is not deadand I have no bells to toll for Him, either! He is risen, He is not here! Here they come, crowds of them with their white linen and their precious spices to wrap a dead Christ up in!

Are they mad? But they say, We were only acting it over again. Oh, was that it? Practical charades, was it? Acting the glorious Atonement of Calvary as a play! Then I accuse the performers of blasphemy before the Throne of the eternal God who hears my words! I charge them with profanity in daring to rehearse in mimicry that which was once done and done forever and is never to be repeated! No, I cannot suppose they meant to mimic the great Sacrifice, and, therefore, I conclude that they thought their Savior to be dead. And so they said, Toll the bells for Him! Kneel down and weep before His image on a cross.

If I believed Jesus Christ died on Good Friday, I would feast all day long because His death is over! As He has ordained the high festival of the Lords Supper to be His commemoration, I would follow His bidding and keep no fast. Who would sit down and whine over a Friend once dead if you know Him to be restored to life and exalted in power? Why toll a bell for a living Friend? However, I condemn not the good people any more than the angels condemned those holy women, only they may take their spices home and their white linen, too, for Jesus is alive and does not need them!

In other ways a great many fussy people do the same thing. See how they come forward in defense of the Gospel. It has been discovered by geology and by arithmetic that Moses was wrong. Straightway many go out to defend Jesus Christ. They argue for the Gospel and apologize for it, as if it were now a little out of date and we must try to bring it round to suit modern discoveries and the philosophies of the present period. That seems to me exactly like coming up with your linen and precious spices to wrap Him in. Take them away! I question whether Butler and Paley have not, both of them, created more infidels than they ever curedand whether most of the defenses of the Gospel are not sheer impertinences. The Gospel does not need defending! If Jesus Christ is not alive and cannot fight His own battles, then Christianity is in an evil case.

But He is and we have only to preach His Gospel in all its naked simplicity, and the power that goes with it will be the evidence of its dignity. No other evidence will ever convince mankind. Apologies and defenses are well intended, no doubtso was the embalming well intended by these good womenbut they are of small value. Give Christ room, give His preachers space and opportunities to preach the Gospel and let the Truth of God be brought out in simple language! And you will soon hear the Master say, Take away the spices, take away the linen! I am alive, I do not need these. We see the same kind of thing in other good people who are sticklers for old-fashioned, stereotyped waysthey must have everything conducted exactly as it used to be conducted 100 or 200 years ago. Puritan order must be maintained and there must be no divergence.

The way of putting the Gospel must be exactly the same way in which it was put by good old Dr. So-and-So, and in the pulpit there must be the most awful dreariness that can possibly be compassed. And the preacher must be devoutly dull and all the worship must be serenely properlots of spices and fine linen to wrap a dead Christ up in! I delight to break down conventional proprieties. It is a grand thing to put ones foot right through merely human regulationslife cannot be strapped down by regulations fit only for the dead! Death lies wrapped up like a mummy in the museumit will always do the proper thing, or rather wont do anything at all. But Life, reality, will show itself unexpected ways. Life will say what Death could not say. It will break out where it was not expected and break all your laws and regulations into a thousand pieces!

But still I see the good people holding up their hands in horror, and crying out, Bring here the Arabian gum, the myrrh and the aloes. Bring here the linenwe must take care of our dear, dead Master. Leave Him alone! Leave Him alone, Man, He is alive and does not need your wrapping up. I do not hesitate to say that a great deal of Church order among Dissenters and Episcopalians, Presbyterians and all sorts of denominations and a great deal of propriety and decorum, and regulation, and, As-itwas-in-the-beginning-is-now-and-ever-shall-be-ismsare only so much spices and knell for a dead Christ. But Christ is alive and what is needed is to give Him room!

I do not say this for my own sakeam I not always proper?but I say it for the sake of earnest Brother Evangelists who, in preaching to the poor, use extravagance of language and perhaps of action. Let them use it. Scoffers say they are histrionic. Was ever anybody ever half so histrionic as Ezekiel? Did not all the Prophets do strange things to get the attention of the people? Why, the same charge was brought against Whitfield and WesleyThese people are breaking through all rules, and so on. What a blessed thing it is when men can do it! Mr. Hill went to Scotland to preach the Gospel and they said he rode on the back of all order and decorum.

Then said he, I will call my pair of horses by those names, and make it true. It was true! No doubt he did ride on the back of order and decorum, but then he drew souls to Christ with those two strange steeds and his breaking through rules enabled him to get at men and women who never

would have been got at in any other way. Be ready to set Christ at liberty and give His servants liberty to serve Him as the Spirit of God shall guide them.

V. I wanted to speak, last of all, upon THE AMAZING NEWS which these good women receivedHe is not here, but is risen!. This was amazing news to His enemies. They said, We have killed Himwe have put Him in the tombit is all over with Him. Aha! Scribe, Pharisee, Priest! What have you done? Your work is all undone, for He is risen! It was terrifying news for Satan. He, no doubt, dreamed that he had destroyed the Saviorbut He is risen! What a thrill had gone through all the regions of Hell! What news it had been for the grave!

Now it was utterly destroyed and Death had lost his sting! What news it was for trembling saints. He is risen, indeed. They plucked up courage and they said, The good cause is still the right one and it will conquer, for our Christ is still alive as its Head! It was good news for sinners! Yes, it is good news for every sinner here. Christ is alive! If you seek Him He will be found of you. He is not a dead Christ to whom I point you today. He is risen! And He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. There is no better news for sad men, for distressed, desponding and despairing men than thisthe Savior livesable, still, to save and willing to receive you to His tender heart!

This was glad news, Beloved, for all the angels and all the spirits in Heaven! Glad news, indeed, for them. And this day it shall be glad news to us, and we will live in the power of it by the help of His Spirit. And we will tell it to our Brethren that they may rejoice with us, and we will not despair any longer. We will give way no more to doubts and fears, but we will say to one another, He is risen, indeed: therefore let our hearts be glad. The Lord bless you, and in coming to His table, as I trust many of His people will come, let us meet our risen Master. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 24.   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1180 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

JESUS NEAR BUT UNRECOGNIZED   
NO. 1180

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

**But their eyes were restrained that they   
should not know Him.   
Luke 24:16.**

THE Lord may be present with His people and yet they may not be conscious of it. They may be conscious of the effect produced thereby, but not of the fact itself. When the Lord visited Abraham in his tent on the plains of Mamre, at the first, at least, Abraham thought he was receiving a wayfaring man and so he entertained the Angel of the Covenant unawares. When the Lord appeared unto Jacob he rose up from the vision and said, Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not. Afterwards at the brook Jabbok, when the Covenant Angel wrestled with him, Jacob was not aware of the exact Character of the mysterious personage, for he said, Tell me Your name. He did not understand who it was with whom he wept, made supplication and prevailed.

The same is true of Joshua. He saw a man standing with his sword drawn in his hand, and he challenged him, mistaking him for a warrior he did not recognize the Person of his Lord until He said, No, but as Captain of the Lords host am I come. It is possible, then, for saints to be favored very remarkably with the Presence of their Master and yet for some cause or other they may not know that He is specially near them. So was it in the case before us, which let us consider.

I. We shall note, first, REASONS WHY, IN THE VERY PRESENCE OF THEIR MASTER, SAINTS MAY NOT KNOW THAT HE IS NEAR. The reason in this case was twofoldfirst, because their eyes were restrained. And secondly, because, as Mark tells us, He appeared unto them in another form. We must not suppose either of these reasons to be untrue, but that they are both true, and that the two evangelists have thus given us the whole of the Truth of God, one taking note of one part of it and the other of the other. The first reason, then, why these good men did not perceive the Presence of their Master was that, their eyes were restrained. There was a blinding cause in them. What was it? We cannot dare saywhere Scripture does not strictly inform us, it is not for us to dogmatize.

By some mysterious operation, their eyes, which were able to see other things, were not able to detect the Presence of their Master. They thought Him to be some common traveler. Still, we are permitted to say that in their case, and in the case of a great many disciples, their eyes may have been restrained through sorrow. They were very grieved for they had lost their Master. He was gone they knew not where. They would have been glad, even, if they could have found His body, but certain women had

gone to the sepulcher, and though they told a wonderful story about a vision of angels, yet to these men it sounded like a knell in their ears, for Him they found not.

Ah, there is no sorrow to a Christian like the loss of his Masters Presence! May you and I never be able to bear it with composure. The days shall come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast. Fast, indeed! There is no fast like that which sets in when those who have once seen the Bridegrooms beauty and tasted of the love that is better than wine, have to cry out, O that I knew where I might find Him! That careless spouse who had slept and would not open to her Beloved for a whilewhen her heart was touched and moved for Himrose up and searched through the streets of the city for Him. She could not rest until she found Him and she made every watchman on the walls hear her questionHave you seen Him whom my soul loves? Sorrow will unsettle the judgment. Even holy sorrow for sin and grief for the absence of the Master may, sometimes, put a mote into the eye and destroy its clear vision. Even tears of repentance have prevented men from seeing Truths of God which might have made their hearts glad.

Again, in their case, in addition to the mysterious operation which held their eyes, which we do not attempt to account for, we have no doubt their eyes were restrained with unbelief. Had they been expecting to see Jesus, I think they would have recognized Him. If they had gone to Emmaus fully persuaded that He was alive somewhere upon the earth, as soon as they had seen Him approach, they would at least have said, Perhaps this is the Master! Perhaps even now He is coming to us. They knew that His delights were with the sons of men, so that He would not long conceal Himself from His beloved while He was on earth. They knew, also, that He loved His own to the end and would love them still. They might, therefore, have felt sure that He would come to meet themand had they been believing and expectingthey would, probably, have discovered Him at once.

Whether it is so or not, I am sure, dear Brothers and Sisters, that our unbelief has often hid the Lord from our eyes. What might we have known of our Lord by this timewhat might we have tasted and handled of Him by this time if it had not been for our unbelief? He might say to some of us, Have I been so long a time with you and yet have you not known Me? By reason of our unbelief we have not dived into the mysteries of His heart! We have not understood the fullness of His love! Oh, for more faith! Faith has the eagles eyesit can see where other eyes cannot penetrate. Oh, for the eyes of lovethe doves eyes of love, by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly setfor faith and love together make up a blessed pair of optics which can see the Lord even when clouds and darkness are roundabout Him!

Whatever may have been mysterious about the restraining of the disciples eyes, they were also somewhat restrained by ignorance. They had failed to see what is plain enough in Scripture, that the Messiah must suffer, bleed and die. They had their sacred books and yet were so little acquainted with their real meaning that, albeit Christ is in every page of the Old Testament, yet they did not perceive Him there! And so, not knowing that all this must be as it had happened, and expecting something very different and more in accordance with the traditional views of their race they did not recognize their Master. If it were not so with them, it is certainly so with many of Gods people today Some professorsI speak it with sorrowdo not know more than the most elementary doctrines of the Gospel. With the exception of knowing themselves sinners and Christ a Savior, they know nothing!

Justification, in the full glory of it, is hidden from their eyes. They do not consider the work of the Holy Spirit. The fullness of the union of the child of God with Christ and the Glory that is to come, which already casts a halo about the saints, they have not perceived. They do not study the Word so as to enter into its depths. They are afraid of some doctrines because they are said to be, High Calvinism, and of other doctrines because they are denounced as, Arminianism. They are frightened into joining a party, instead of taking the Truth as God has revealed it and beholding Jesus sitting upon the Truth like a king upon a throne of ivory. Beloved, the scales of ignorance have often restrained the eyes of the saintsit is well when the Holy Spirit opens our understandings to receive the Scriptures and enables us to see Jesus Christ as He truly is in the field of the Word of Godlike a precious treasure hidden therein! Thus Jesus may be with His people, but they may not see Him because of something in themselves.

At other times they may not see Him because of something in the Master. Listen, as I have told you, Mark says He appeared unto them in another form. I suppose he means in a form in which they had not seen Him before. The Lord Jesus Christ has appeared at times in the Old Testament to His servants, but on each occasion in a different form. To Abraham, who was a stranger and a wayfaring man in the land, He appeared as a pilgrim. To Jacob, who was a wrestler with his brother, He appeared as a wrestler. To Joshua, who was a soldier, fighting to conquer Canaan, He appeared as a soldier. To the holy children who were in the furnace He appeared as one walking amidst the burning coals. He puts Himself into fellowship with His people. So here the two travelers were overtaken by a third travelerHe appeared to them in that form in which they themselves were!

As He is to make them like Himself, He begins by making Himself like they are. As the children were partakers of flesh and blood, so He, also, Himself took part of the same. Jesus condescends to our condition and our circumstances. There is no position into which Providence may cast us but what Jesus can sympathize with us. We see Him best under certain characters when we, ourselves, are in that form of character. Beloved, it may be you are a beginner in Divine Grace and, up to now, the Lord Jesus has appeared to you with a smile upon His faceas a gentle Shepherd leading the lambs. But possibly for a while He has gone, or you think so, for you feel His rebuke in your soul as if He were saying to you, O

fool and slow of heart.

You conclude within yourself, This cannot be Christ. I thought He was always a feeder of lambs. Yes, so He is, but He sometimes comes with a scourge of small cords to chase out buyers and sellers from His Temple. He is the same Christ, only you have not seen Him in that Character. Perhaps you have only seen Jesus as your joy and consolationunder that aspect may you always see Him, but, rememberHe shall sit as a Refiner. He shall purify the sons of Levi. When you are in the furnace, suffering affliction, trial and depression of spirit, the Refiner is Christ, the same loving Christ in a new Character. Up to then you have seen Christ as breaking the Bread of Life to you and giving you to drink of the Water of Life, but you must learn that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge the floor of your heart. He is not another Christ, but He puts on another aspect and exercises another office.

At first, poor sinners are content to see Jesus as their Priest who cleanses them from sin. They must go on to see Him as their King who conquers them by the sacred arms of loveand they must also know Him as their Prophetleading them into the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. They must not wonder if He appears unto them in another form while they are learning more of Him. This kind of sacred philosophy comes by experience, for how often do we find precious children of God distressed because they have not, today, the same sweets they used to have? At first we give little children such food as will be easily assimilatedthey have nothing else but milk. By-and-by hard crusts are given them, for there are wisdom teeth to be cut. Suppose when we give them more solid food, they began crying out for the milk, again? Should we give it to them?

The Lord does not wish you always to be babes! He would have you grow into men in Christ Jesus. And though Christ is always your food whether He comes to you as milk or as meat, yet still He will not always be milk to you lest you should remain a babe. He means to be meat to you that your senses may be exercised, that you may be able to understand the stronger and deeper Truths of the Kingdom of God. Do not, therefore, be astonished! Or, if you are, let this always comfort you, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and though He may change the form under which He manifests Himself, yet He is the immutable Lord of Love.

You have thus heard two reasons why saints may have Christ with them and yet may not discern Him. First, because of themselvestheir eyes are restrained. And, next, because of HimselfHe may appear in another form.

II. Secondly, let us speak of the manners of the saints when they are in such a case. When their Master is with them and they do not know Him, how do they conduct themselves? First, they are sad because the Presence of Christ, if Christ is unknown, is not comfortable, though it may be edifying. It may be for rebuke, as it was to them, but it certainly is not for consolation. For joy, we must have a known Christ. Saints are always downcast when Jesus is not known to be present and, as I have said before, may we never be otherwise than unhappy if our Lord is hid from us. I can understand the child of God saying, I am out of fellowship with Christ, but I cannot understand his saying that calmly and deliberately, without tears, without deep regret and intense repentance!

I can comprehend that the heir of Heaven may walk in darkness and see no light, but I cannot understand how he can be at home in darkness. Set a bird of the day flying by night and see how it flutters, and how uneasy it is. Go with a candle, if you will, to any place where a number of birds have made their nests, and see how strangely bewildered they are. The only bird that will be at home in the dark is the owl, the bird of the nightand if any one of you can be happy without your Master you are of the night. If you can be content without the sunlight of Jesus Presence, depend upon it, you are one of the bats of the cavernyou are not one of the eagles of the day. God grant us to be like these disciplessad, doubly sad, if we do not know our God to be with us.

Next, these disciples, though they did not know that their Master was there, conversed togethera good example for all Christians. Whether you are in the full joy of your faith or not, speak often to one another. He who is strong will help the weak Brother. If two walk together, if one shall trip, perhaps the other will not, and so he will have a hand to spare to support his friend. Even if both saints are unhappy, yet some good result will come from mutual sympathy. The one is saying, I have lost my Master, and the other replies, I have lost my Master, too, and they will both know that they are not the only persons in such a caseand that is some help to a man in sorrow. Sometimes even a gleam of light, such as will arise from the fact that another is in the same plight, may be useful.

Christian people, commune together, but let your communications always be like these which are recorded in this chapter. Speak of Him, talk of Him, what you know of Him, of your sorrows about Him, even of your neglects of Him, of your ill treatment of Him, your sins against Him. Talk of these things to one another, for so long as they are about Him, it will be good, even, to confess your faults to one another, for it will lead you to pray for one another and to join your prayers together, so that there will be greater strength in the petitions. For if two of you are agreed, you know what power that sweet agreement has with Heaven. They that feared the Lord spoke often to one another.

A blessed practice, an ancient practice, an edifying practice, a Godhonoring practiceone which so pleased God that He turned eavesdroppercame under the window to listen to what they said and took His notebook and recorded ita book of remembrance was written. And He has published it and given His blessing to those that fear the Lord and that think upon His name. Beloved, even if you are out of fellowship with Jesus, do not forsake the assembly of Gods people. Though you may feel unworthy to speak with them, yet get among them and perhaps, there, you will find your Master.

Note, next, that these disciples, in addition to communicating with one another, were ready to be communed with by good men. When this new Pilgrim on the road came up and asked them a question, they were not shy, they were ready to give an answer. They poured out their hearts to Him and He talked to them, and they were soon on the way to being instructed. It is well for Christians to be willing to receive the Truth of God, not merely through their own immediate companions, but from others who fear the Lord, who perhaps may have looked at things from a different point of view and who may have received clearer light. These two disciples were communicative. It is a pity that Christian people so often shut themselves up within themselves.

This is a particular fault of English people. You may travel all over the world in the same railway carriage with an Englishman and he will not say a word to you! I am sure Christian people would get much good from one another if they would not be so distant. Many precious children of God have sat side by side by the hour together and out of undue reserve, which they have thought most proper, they have failed to communicate and have missed the opportunity of a sacred commerce of thought and experience which would have enriched them both. Be ready to communicate (not, of course, being indiscreet, for there is such a thing as casting pearls before swine). Using a heavenly prudence, be free to speak to those who are willing to converse concerning Christ.

John Bunyan in his, Pilgrims Progress, has a very witty and pithy piece about Mr. Talkative, who joined with the pilgrims. And, if you remember, he would soon have wearied them with his chat, had not Christian and Hopeful adopted a capital expedient for getting rid of him. They would talk of nothing else but their inward experience in the things of God. And after a while Mr. Talkative dropped behindthat was not the sort of talk he wanted! And you will not long be troubled with the company of a gentleman who does not love your Master if you keep to the grand theme. He will soon be sick of you and go where his trashy wares are saleable, which they do not appear to be in your market, for you have better goods on hand. These good people were communicative to those who could sympathize with them.

Note, again, that though they did not know their Master was there, yet they avowed their hopes concerning Him. I cannot commend all that they said, there was not much faith in it, but they did confess that they were followers of Jesus of Nazareth. We trusted that it had been He which should deliver Israel. And, besides all this, today is the third day. And they went on to let out the secret that they belonged to His disciples. Certain women of our company made us astonished. They were under a cloud and sad, but they were not so cowardly as to disown their connection with the Crucified. They were not so far gone in depression of spirit as to talk about the whole thing as though it were to be disavowed or concealed, lest anybody should say, You were the foolish dupes of an impostor.

They still avowed their hope. And oh, Beloved, when your comforts are at the lowest ebb, still cling to your Master! If I never get a smile from His face as long as I live, I must speak well of Him. If never again I see Him, yet is He the Chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. I like to see the strong retentiveness of many an almost despairing saint. I remember a minister who was talking to a poor bedridden woman who was under a grievous cloud, and she said, Sir, I do not think I have any faith or any love for Christ whatever. He knew better, for he knew what her life had been, and so, walking up to the window, he wrote on a piece of paper, I do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, and he brought it back with a pencil, and said, Now, Sarah, sign that.

When she had read it, she said, Oh, Sir, I would be torn to pieces before I would sign that. Oh, but you said it just now. Ah, Sir, but I could not put my hand to it. Then I suspect, Sarah, that you do love Him. Well, Sir, whether I do or not, I will never give Him up. I remember visiting a woman, years ago, whom I never could comfort till she died, and then she died triumphantly. I said to her, What do you come to the Chapel for? What is the good of it if there is nothing there for you? No, she said, still I like to be there. If I perish, I will perish listening to the precious Word of God. Well, but why is it you remain a member of the Church, as you say you are not a saved soul? Well, she said, I know I am not worthy, but unless you turn me out I will never go out, for I like to be with Gods people. I desire to be numbered with them, too, though I know I am not worthy, for I have no hope.

I said, Well, now, come, I will give you five pounds if you will give up your hope altogether. And I drew out my purse. Five pounds! she said, and she looked at me with utter horror. Five pounds! She would not give Christ up for 5,000 worlds. But you have not got Him, you said. No, Sir, I am afraid I have not got Him, but I will never give Him up. Ah, there came out the real truth. So was it with these two disciplesthey talked as if they could not give Him up! Though they were afraid that He had not risen from the dead, yet they remained His disciples, and spoke of, Certain women of our company. They were half-unconsciously clinging to the forlorn cause in its very worst estate. And, Beloved, so will we. We will say with JobThough He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

*When our eye of hope is dim,   
Well trust in Jesus, sink or swim.   
Still at His footstool bow the knee,   
And Israels God our help shall be.*

But, passing onthese poor people, though very sad, and without their Master as they thought, were very willing to bear rebukes. Although the word used by our Lord should not be rendered, fools, yet it sounds somewhat hard, even, to call them inconsiderate and thoughtlessbut we do not discover any resentment on their part because they were so severely chided. Souls that really love Jesus do not grow angry when faithfully rebuked. Beloved, do you approve the sermon which cuts you up root and branches? Are you thankful for the ministry which smites your faults? Do you say to the Lord, as you bare your bosom to the sword of

His Word, Search me and try me? Ah, then, there is something more in you than in the man of the world, for his proud heart rebels when his conscience is too roughly assailed.

I had, the other day, some such conversation as this reported to meA man and his wife had come to the Tabernacle. The wife said she liked to go to Churchher husband said he preferred to come here. What do you think were the reasons for each choice? The woman said, Spurgeon is too plain. That is why I like him, said the husband. He is too personal, said the wife, I do not think people ought to be talked to in that way. That is what we need, said the husband, we need to have it brought home to us. What is the good of our going where there is nothing said that really belongs to us? That is just so. We do not need a Gospel that belongs to the people on the moon, but to ourselves! Some admire a preacher who can send a stone so high that it never hits anythingbut we need a preacher who can sling a stone to a hairs breadth and not miss the target of the conscience. Whatever deficiency there may be about them, those are right at bottom who can bear to be somewhat roughly rebuked by their Master.

And then, they were willing to learn. Never better pupils, never a better Teacher, never a better school book, never a better explanation! They were disciples, with Christ to teach them, with the Bible for a school book and Himself to be the expositionso they listened while He went on to open up from Genesis right through the Old Testamentthe things concerning Himself! Poor child of God, are you in doubt and trouble? Still be anxious to learn of Jesus! Pray the Lord to enlighten you! Ask Him to teach you His statutes and to open your eyes to behold wondrous things out of His Law, for whatever Gods children may not be, they are a teachable people. They shall all sit down at His feet and all receive of His Words.

Again, dear Friends, notice that while the two were willing to learn, they also wished to retain the teacher and His instruction, and to treat Him kindly, too. They said, Abide with us; the day is far spent. They had been benefited by Him and therefore they wished to show their gratitude to Him. Have you learned so much that you are willing to learn more? Are you of a teachable heart, ready to receive, with meekness, the engrafted Word of God? Now, I speak not of myself, for I have no cause to complain, but I have known true servants of Christ whom the people have driven forth from them because they were fickle and needed a change, for changes sake. They have not said, Abide with us. Neither have they given them to eat, but though they have been worthy servants of God they have been thrust out not knowing where they should goand their people not caring where.

I believe that God resents these things and that the unkind treatment of His servants will bring judgment upon the Church. If He sends ministers with His message, He expects them to be treated with respect and kindness. Just as Moses said to Hobab, so wise Believers say to God-sent ministers, Come with us and we will do you good, and you shall be to us instead of eyes, for you know where we should encamp in the wilderness; and as the Lord deals with us so we will deal with you. These two disciples entertained their instructor and would not let Him go.

And, once more, though they did not know that their Master was with them, they were well prepared to join in worship. Some have thought that the breaking of bread that night was only Christs ordinary way of offering a blessing before meat. It does not seem so to me, because they had already eaten and were in the middle of the meal when He took the bread and blessed it. I think He did, then and there, set before them those dear tokens of His passion, which He bids us feast upon on the first day of the week, that we may show His death until He shall come. Whichever it was, whether the devotion proper to their own table, or the devotion proper to the Lords Table, they joined in it.

Now, it is a strong temptation of Satan with children of God, when they are full of sorrow, to tempt them to stay away from the means of Grace. Because they are in the dark, the temptation is to keep them away from the lightbut oh, children of God, do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is. Do not be tempted to stay away from the place where God has met you and made the place of His feet glorious! Join, still, with the Lords peopleand if your faith trembles, yet, nevertheless, come humbly to the Table. Christ has not a Table for those without doubts, else you might not comeHe has not made it a table for those without sin, else you might not comebut He bids all His disciples come, you among them!

III. Lastly, let us try to set forth THE ACTIONS OF BELIEVERS WHEN THEY DISCOVER THEIR LORD. Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. What then? Well, first, they discovered that there had been, all along in their hearts, evidences of His Presence. Did not our hearts burn within us while He spoke with us by the way? This heavenly heartburn never comes to any but through the Presence of the Lord Jesus. They began to look at one another, and say, Ought we not to have known that it was none other than our great Teacher by the very fact that when we did not see Him our hearts were burning for Him?

Now let me turn this text around a little. There is a poor sinner here who says, Oh, how I wish that I could find the Savior, but I cannot find Him. Why? Your heart is burning after Him! Who is it that makes you long after Him? Those strong desires are kindled by His Sovereign Grace. He is near you. But I feel so much of the evil of sin! Oh, that it were rolled away. My heart cries, Give me Christ, or else I die. Do you think that humanity unrenewed by Grace cries in that way? Surely the Master is near you! There is already, if not a summer in your soul, at least a springtide. The ice is breaking up, the buds are beginning to swell, the sun is coming and you are beginning to feel His glow! The Lord is not far from you and one of these days when you come to look back upon it you will say, I did not know it, but He was close to me. I said, Where shall I find Him? and all the while He was close upon me!

I now turn to the child of God. You, perhaps, have said, I have lost communion with my Lord in that happy form I once enjoyed. But I can never be satisfied without Him. I could sit down and cry my eyes out to think

*What peaceful hours I once enjoyed   
How sweet their memory still!   
But they have left an aching void   
The world can never fill.*

Where does this kind of heartburn come from? From the devil? Then he has undertaken a new business! Does it come from yourself? Is that a sheep calling the shepherd? To me it looks like the Shepherd seeking the sheep! But you say, Oh, how I wish I could return to walking with God, in Christ, and sitting under His shadow with great delight. Do you desire it vehemently, passionately, as they that wait for the morning? Who made you desire it, do you think? Is He so far away where those strong desires are present? I know it is not so!

Ah, you say, I feel in my soul that I love Him. Yet I am afraid I have no fellowship with Him. But when I hear His name extolled, I say in my heart, That is the sweetest music under Heaven. When I hear my Master spoken well of, I wish I had the tongue of men and angels that I might speak of Him, too. He cannot be too greatly extolled for me. I find tears in my eyes when I hear of His true love for sinners. Sometimes I am afraid I deceive myself, and am not a partaker in it, but still He is a precious Christ, and glory be to His name. Do you think you would have your heart burning like that if He had quite gone? I think not!

You feel your heart burning for the conversion of others! You say, Oh that we had a revival of religion everywhere, that the kingdom would come unto Christ and the crown were set upon His head over ten thousand times ten thousand human hearts! Your heart breaks for the longing that Christ may be glorified among men, and yet you say, I am afraid He is not with me? One of these days you will say, Did not my heart burn within me? He must have been near. You are blindfolded and cannot see the fire, yet, if on a cold day you get very hot, I should think there must be a fire near you! If you cannot see Jesus to your souls comfort, yet still, if there is such glowing and burning as these, He is very near you!

Sometimes on the Sabbath do you not know what it is to say, Oh, my Lord and Master, the days are weary in which I do not see Youwhen shall I behold You face to face? You have heard of the glories of Christ in Heaven and you have longed to peep through the keyhole, if that were all, that you might see the King in His beauty! And you have cried, Why is His chariot so long in coming? You have often wished you could

*Sit and sing yourself away*

*To everlasting bliss.*   
Well, you may be sure the lodestone is not far off when the needle is so much moved. When your eyes are opened you will say, Why, He was with me! He was with me! Did not my heart burn within me while He spoke with me by the way? My doubts and fears and trembling heart forbade my understanding how near the precious Christ was to me.

The next thing they did was to compare joys. The one said to the other, Did not our hearts burn within us? It is always a good thing for Believers to communicate their returning enjoyment. Somehow we are rather shy as to speaking of our joys. Ought we to be so? One does not mind speaking of his faults to his Brother, for there does not seem to be any assumption in that. But if the Lord is very gracious I have known Believers feel as if they could not speak of it lest they should seem to exalt themselves. We must studiously avoid everything like self-exaltation, but we must not rob our Master of a particle of His Glory. If we have seen the Lord, let us tell our Brothers and Sisters so, and say to one another, Did not our hearts burn within us?

If you had a very dull and dry discourse you would get together and say, Oh dear, dear! Our Sundays are dreadfully wasted. We do not profit. The good man is so dull and dead, and so on. You would be sure to say that, would you not? Well, when the Lord refreshes you, say to one another, It was good to be there this morning. We had a feast of fat things. The Lord was with us. Do not leave the table of spiritual bread till, like a good child, you have thanked your Father. Once again. These disciples, when they saw the Master, hastened to tell others about it. It was the dead of the night, I suppose, by the time they knew their Lord.

Our Lord Jesus had none of the prejudices of the High Church fraternity against breaking bread in the evening. That has always seemed to me to be the oddest of their freaksthat they will persist in contending that the Lords Supper ought to take place early in the morning! They ought not to call it a, supperthey should call it a breakfast. I never could understand a certain class of Christians, great sticklers, too, for Scripture, who always will have the Lords Supper in the morning of the day, without any precedent, that I know of, for turning an evening meal into a morning one. I grant there is no importance whatever in the timethe only importance that I speak of is putting an importance on a wrong timewhich those do who say it ought to be in the early part of the day. We say that whenever Believers meet together they may break bread in remembrance of their Lord! If, however, there is one time more like the first occasion, it certainly is the evening of the day.

Though it was late, the two disciples set off on a seven-and-a-half mile journey, in the dead of night, to tell others that they had seen the Lord! If ever you find Christ to the joy of your heart, go and tell His people about it. Yes, and tell sinners, too, and put yourself to inconvenience to do it. Nowadays we are willing to testify if we can do it very comfortablybut I love to hear of those good Brethren who will walk many miles on Sunday to preach the Gospelwho are willing to sacrifice ease and comfort so that they may do good to others, just as these did. Oh, for more enthusiasm in telling of the Saviors love and hearing of it! We need nice cushions and very comfortable pews, dont we, nowadays? When we were first converted we would stand anywhere in the crowd if we could but hear the Saviors

name!

I remember when I would have gone over hedge and ditch to hear about my Master, or to preach about Him, too. May our earnest love to Him never grow cold and our enthusiasm never depart. May a midnights walk be nothing to us if we may but declare even to unbelieving brethren what we have seen of our blessed Lord! It is a good message, and it is a good errand to go upon, when we go to tell of Jesusand it will bring good to our own souls.

I notice that while they told of their Lords appearing, they made mention of the ordinance which had been blest to them, for they especially said that He had been known to them in the breaking of bread. I like to see them mention that, for, though ordinances are nothing in themselves, and are not to be depended upon, they are blest to us. There is a tendency among us, because others make too much of ordinances, to make too little of them. Do not treat Baptism, or the Lords Supper, or the reading of the Word of God, or the hearing of it, in a slighting manner. If these are blest to you, bless God for them! And if God speaks to you through them, do not forget to say that they have been valuable channels of communication.

And now, dear child of God, I pray for you and for myself that we may always have our Master with usand may know it! But, if we lose His recognized Presence, may we act as these two disciples did, or better. May the Lord lead us on from strength to strength and glorify Himself in us. If there is any poor sinner here who needs Jesus Christ, let him remember that his desire after Christ is an indication of the nearness of the Savior to Him. Christ is always within eye-shot. He cries, Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth. He is close at hand to every seeking soul. If you seek Him He will be found of you. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Trust Him and He is yours. May Jesus abide with you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 24:1-35.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK766, 776, 785.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1980 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FOLLY OF UNBELIEF   
NO. 1980

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 28, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Then He said unto them, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken.   
Luke 24:25.**

THE two disciples who walked to Emmaus and conversed together and were sad, were true Believers. We may not judge men by their occasional feelings. The possession of gladness is no clear evidence of Grace and the existence of depression is no sure sign of insincerity. The brightest eyes that look for Heaven have sometimes been so that they could not see their hearts true joy. Be not cast down, my Brothers and Sisters, if occasionally the tears of sadness bathe your cheeks. Jesus may be drawing near to you and yet you may be troubled by mysteries of grief.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to the two disciples and took a walk of some seven miles with them to remove their sadness, for it is not the will of our Lord that His people should be cast down. The Savior does, Himself, that which He commanded the ancient Prophet to do. Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem. Thus He spoke and thus He acts. He was pleased when He went away to send us another Comforter, because He wishes us to abound in comfort. But that promise proves that He was and is, Himself, a Comforter. Do not dream, when in sadness, that your Lord has deserted you rather reckon that for this very reason He will come to you! As her babes cry quickens the mothers footsteps to come to it more speedily, so shall your griefs hasten the visits of your Lord. He hears your groans, He sees your tearsare they not in His bottle? He will come to you as the God of All Consolation.

Observe that when the Savior did come to these mourning ones, He acted very wisely towards them. He did not at once begin by saying, I know why you are sad. No, He waited for them to speak and, in His patience, drew forth from them the items and particulars of their trouble. You that deal with mourners, learn here the way of wisdom! Do not talk too much, yourselves. Let the swelling heart relieve itself. Jeremiah derives a measure of help from his own lamentationseven Job feels a little the better from pouring out his complaint. Those griefs which are silent run very deep and drown the soul in misery. It is good to let sorrow have a tongue where sympathy has an ear. Allow those who are seeking the Lord to tell you their difficultiesdo not discourse much with them till they have done so. You will be the better able to deal with them and they will be the better prepared to receive your words of cheer. Often, by facing the disease of sorrow, the cure is half effected, for many doubts and fears vanish when described. Mystery gives a tooth to misery and when that mystery is extracted by a clear description, the sharpness of the woe is over. Learn, then, you who would be comforters, to let mourners hold forth their wound before you pour in the oil and wine!

Learn also a sacred lesson, O you mourners! It is well for you, when you are pouring out your griefs, that you do so before the Lord. These two troubled wayfarers, though they knew it not, were telling their sorrow to Him who best of all could help them to bear it. You may tell your friends, if you will, and it will be some relief to you, but if you seek the Throne of Grace and make the Redeemer your chief Confidant, your relief will be sure! Get alone; shut the door; bow there, apart from the disciples, and say, Jesus, Master, I would tell You that which saddens me! O great High Priest, who was compassed with infirmities, You will understand me better than my nearest friend and I would place myself beneath Your care! How great the privilege that we have access with boldness to the ear and heart of Jesus our Lord!

Again, learn another point of wisdom. When our Lord had heard their statement of distress He might immediately have comforted thema word would have done it. Did He not say, Mary, and did she not at once turn and say, Rabboni, with ecstatic delight? He went more wisely to work than to administer hurried consolationHe rather rebuked than encouraged them. He began by saying, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the Prophets have spoken! Observe that I quote the Revised Version, for the Authorized is too harsh. Our Lord did not call them fools, but foolish persons. The difference is rather in the manner than in the sense. He chided them gently, but still wisely. He let them know that their unbelief was blameworthy and He called them foolish for indulging it. O beloved Brother, if your Master chide you, do not doubt His love! If, when you go to Him in grief, He answers you roughly, it is His love scarcely disguised, which thus seeks your truest welfare. If you believe in your Lord, you will reply, Master, say on. If He calls you foolish, you will wonder that He does not say something worse of youand in any case you will trust Him after the manner of Job when He said, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

Especially observe that our Saviors rebuke was aimed at their unbelief. Unbelief, which we so often excuse, and for which we almost claim pity, is not treated by our Lord as a trifle. It is for this that He calls them foolish. It is about this that He chides the slowness of their hearts. Do not let us readily excuse ourselves for mistrust of God. If we ever doubt our gracious Lord, let us feel ourselves to be verily guilty. Regard unbelief as a fault rather than a weakness. Brace yourselves to seek a braver and more constant faith than you have reached as yet. Why should we go on blundering and misjudging and, therefore, fretting when a little consideration will set us right and, at the same time, cause us to honor our Lord and to be, ourselves, filled with joy and peace through believing?

I am going to handle this rebuke as God the Holy Spirit shall help me first addressing it to the true Believer and, secondly, to the seeker. I shall have to bring forth some bitter things which will act as a tonic, but by giving tone to your system, they will, in the end, remove your fears better than sweeter matters would have done. Hear, then, our Lord say, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the Prophets have spoken!

In speaking to Believers, I would have them observe that our Lord rebuked their unbelief under two heads. First, as being folly and secondly, as arising from slowness of heart.

I. First, then, UNBELIEF IS FOLLY. Not to believe all that the Prophets have spoken and not to draw comfort out of it, is great folly. Folly! Note the word. O fools! O foolish men! It is folly such as makes the tender Jesus cry out!

It is folly because it arises from lack of thought and consideration . Not to think is folly. To give way to sadness, when a little thought would prevent it, is foolishness, is it not? If these two disciples had sat down and said, Now the Prophets have said concerning the Messiah that He shall be led as a lamb to the slaughter and thus was it with our Master, they would have been confirmed in their confidence that Jesus was the Messiah. If they had said, The Prophet David wrote, They pierced My hands and My feet, they would have recognized in this their crucified Lord. And if then they had turned to the other passages of the Prophets in which they speak of Messiahs future Glory, they would have been refreshed with hope.

In the Scriptures they would have found types, figures and plain words in which the death and the rising againthe shame and the Glory of Christ are linked togetherand His Cross is made the road to His Throne. Had they compared the testimony of the holy women with the prophecies of the Old Testament, they would have obtained ground of hope. The women reported that the body was no longer in the tomb and that they had seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Two Apostles went to the sepulcher and gave a similar reportand this tallied with the Lords own words in which He made Jonah His typebecause he came up from the deep on the third day. But they forgot the Scriptures! They did not think of that great source of hope. Their eyes were dimmed with tears so that they did not see what was plain before them. How many a precious text have you and I read again and again without perceiving its joyful meaning because our minds have been clouded with despondency! We take the telescope and try to look into heavenly thingsand we breathe upon the glass with the hot breath of our anxiety till we cannot see anythingand then we conclude that there is nothing to be seen!

Do you not think, Beloved, you that are depressed and sorrowing today, that if you thought more of the promises revealed in Gods Word, you would soon see things differently and would rise out of your downcast condition? You put your Bibles away and read nothing but the roll of your troubles! There are no handkerchiefs for the tears of saints like those which are folded up within the golden box of Gods Word. He who inspired this volume is The Comforterwill you not apply to Him in your dark hours? O you whose melancholy arises from forgetfulness of the Words of your heavenly Father, of the tender Savior and of the Divine Spirit, I beseech you be more considerate! Think of Gods Providence, His unchanging love, His power, His faithfulness, His mercy. Think of the promises and, as you handle them by thought, they will exhale a sweet perfume which will delight you! Holy thought will charm you out of your griefs. But what folly it is that, for lack of thought, we should bow our heads like the bulrush, when, like the sunflower, we might look at the light till we became little suns ourselves!

Unbelief is folly because it is inconsistent with our own professions. The two disciples professed that they believed in the Prophets and I have no doubt that they did. They were devout Jews who accepted the Holy Books as Divinely Inspired and, therefore, Infallible. And yet now they were acting as if they did not believe in the Prophets at all! Are we not often found guilty of the same inconsistency? O Brothers and Sisters, it is one thing to say, I believe the Bible, but it is quite another thing to act upon that belief! We have more of seeming faith than of real faith! That Book is true and every promise in it is trueand I know and believe that it is soand yet, when I come to the test, how much of faith evaporates and how sadly my fluttering heart proves that my belief was more in fancy than in fact? There is more infidelity in the best Believer than he dreams of. We think we believe in the whole and yet, when it comes to the detail and we have to deal with this promise and with that as a matter of fact in everyday life, we have to light a candle and sweep the house to find our faith. What folly this is!

If the Word of the Lord is true, it is true and we ought to act upon it. If it is not true, why do we profess to believe it? That which is unquestionably true will bear all the strain and pressure which life and its trials may put upon it and it is for us to act upon this belief. Brethren, it ill becomes us to play at believinglet us have our wits about us and make serious business of that which is not sent to delude us, but soundly to instruct us! The Word of the Lord is in harmony with His Providence and as we believe Him as to the one, we must trust Him as to the other! We may safely rest the weight of our body and soulour present and futureupon the sure promise of a faithful God. And we are bound by our profession to do so. It is folly to call ourselves believers in the Bible and then to doubt and distrust.

Folly, again, is clearly seen in unbelieving sadness because the evidence which should cheer us is so clear. In the case of the Brothers going to Emmaus, they had solid ground for hope. They speak, to my mind, a little cavalierly of the holy women as, certain women. Yet there were no better disciples in the world than those women. They were surely the best of the chosen companyMary and the Magdalene. Even the testimonies of Peter and John, the very chief of the Apostles, are not sufficiently valued, for they speak of, certain of them which were with us. I say not they speak disrespectfully, but there is a slurring of their witness by casting a doubt upon it. Concerning these godly women, they leave an impression on my mind as if they had said, Women will talk and these women said that they had seen a vision of angels which said that He was alive. It is rehearsed as hearsay of a hearsaythey said that they had seen those who had said. If they had been pushed to the point, the two disciples would not have allowed that the Magdalene and the other women, or Peter, or John, were unworthy of credence! And yet they were, by their sadness, acting as if the witnesses were mistaken. If those who were at the empty sepulcher were to be believed, why did they doubt? The evidence which they, themselves, detail, though we have it only in brief in this place, was conclusive evidence that Christ had left the tomband yet they doubted it!

Now, dear Friends, you and I have had superabundant evidence of the faithfulness of God and if we are unbelieving, we are unreasonable and foolish! At least I stand here to confess that whenever I doubt my God it is, on my part, a superfluity of naughtiness. I have never had any reason to distrust Him! These many years that I have trusted in Him, He has never failed me once! Experienced Christians, how can you waver in your confidence? If we disbelieve, is it not folly? If the Savior does not call us fools, we are forced to call ourselves so!

We could not suppose that the promise, Covenant and oath of God could fail. The supposition cannot be tolerated for an instant! Thousands of souls are resting everything upon the faithfulness of God and desire no other security. But if God is unfaithful, what will become of them? If the foundations are removed, what can the righteous do? Then they that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, or, even if they are in Heaven, what security have they there if God can change? I feel quite safe on board the ship of the Covenant, for all the saints are floating in this one vessel. If God fails, then we all fail together and that is the end of faith, hope and all things! Therefore, let us not be so foolish as to sin against the light of clear Truths of God. Let us believe what we have known, tasted and handled. Let past experience anchor us firmly as to future circumstances.

Unbelief is folly because it very often arises out of our being in such a hurry. They said, Beside all this, this is the third day. I know that they had expected great things on that third day and were justified in expecting them. But still, the day was not yet over and they were in as great a fever as if it were past a month ago! Although the Savior had said that He would rise on the third day, He had not said that He would appear to them all on the third day. He told them to go into Galilee and there they should see Himbut that meeting had not yet come. He that believes shall not make haste, but they that do not believe are always restless! Well is it written, You have need of patience. Gods promises will be kept to the moment, but they will not all be fulfilled today. Divine promises are, some of them, bills which are payable so many days after sightand because they are not paid at sight we doubt whether they are good billsis this reasonable? Are we not foolish to doubt the sure handwriting of a God that cannot lie? Because the Lord has not carried out your interpretation of His promise in the way of your own dictation, therefore you question His truthfulness? If the vision tarries, will you not wait for it? It will come in its own appointed time. Would you have it hurried on for you? What next? Shall the sun and moon be quickened in their pace to suit your rashness? Must God, Himself, alter His purposes at your bidding? Truly, things have come to a pretty pass! Are you a man, or God? If you are a man, wait Gods time and in your patience possess your soul. If you do not, but, like a fretful child, must have everything now, or else cry and fight, you deserves the rod and well may the Lord say to you, O foolish one!

Yet, again, I think we may well be accused of folly whenever we doubt, because we make ourselves suffer needlessly. There are enough bitter wells in this wilderness without our digging more. There are enough real causes of sorrow without our inventing imaginary ones. I believe that the sharpest griefs in the world are those that men make for themselves. No asp ever stung Cleopatra so terribly as that which she held to her breast, herself. Certain of our friends spend all their days in stitching away to make themselves garments of sackcloth. I have seen the cobbler with his lap stone cobbling up a trouble and he has done his work so well that the shoe has pinched his feet for many a day. It seems a pity, does it not? Yet, Brothers and Sisters, we have those about us who are great at selfworrying. When you were boys, I do not suppose you ever went into the woods to find a stick for your father to beat you withbut you have done so, again and again, since you have been menand the more is the pity that you should be so foolish. If these two travelers had considered and believed, they would have known that Christ was risen from the dead! And as they walked along to Emmaus, if, indeed, they had ever taken that walk at all, their faces would have brightened at the prospect of soon seeing Him whom they loved so well.

I want you to notice yet further that it was folly, but it was nothing more. I feel so thankful to our Lord for using that word. Though we ought to condemn our own unbelief with all our hearts, yet our Savior is full of tenderness and so freely forgives that He looks upon our fault as folly and not as willful wickedness. He does not take our doubt as an affront, but He calls it folly. He knows that it is true of His children, as it is of ours, that folly is bound up in the heart of a child. He puts that down to childish folly which He might have called by a harsher name. I am sure that any dear, obedient child, will feel thankful if his father calls his fault by the lighter name of, follybecause it will prove that he loves him and will endeavor to teach him better. It was not wicked rebellionthere was no enmity in it. They loved their Lord, though they feared He had not risen from the dead.

I do not want you to draw undue comfort from this gentle word, but yet I would have you lose none of the cheer it is meant to convey. You that are vexed at your own doubts are not to come to the conclusion that the Lord utterly rejects you. He discriminates between the folly of a child and the wickedness of a rebelHe knows what is in your heart and knows that you are His. You are like a ship that is well anchored and though the tide is rushing in and makes your vessel roll from side to side, so that you stagger, yet the vessel is not loosed from its mooringsneither are you in any danger! Your faith is fixed on Christ and this Anchor holds you. Though you are tossed about a little, you will suffer no shipwreck because of sin, but much sea-sickness because of folly! So much concerning unbelieving sadness as folly.

II. In the second place, our Lord rebuked them for SLOWNESS OF HEART TO BELIEVE.   
This is an evil greatly to be fought against, but it is by no means a rare sin among the people of God. Let me try and bring home the charge made by our Lord against the two disciples, since I fear it applies to us as much as to them. Our hearts are full often sluggish in believingat least, mine is soand I suppose we are much alike.   
First, we are slow in heart to believe our God, for we are much more ready to believe others than to believe Him. I am often amazed with the credulity of good people whom I had credited with more sense. Credulity towards man and incredulity towards God are amazing things to find in the same person! We cannot help seeing in the daily papers how easily people are duped. Get up a prospectus and a list of names as directors, including a titled pauper, and you can bring in money by the wagonload! The confidence trick can still be successfully performed. One impostor lived for months by calling at the door of guileless old people in almshouses and telling them that a cousin in America had died and left them a fortunebut it was essential that fees should be paid at the government officesand then the legacy would at once be handed over. Times after times the money has been scraped together; the rogue has gone his way and no more has been heard of the cousin in America!   
There are so many simpletons about that rogues reap harvests all the months of the year. And yet the God of Truth is doubted! Yet the incorruptible Word is mistrusted! This makes our slowness of heart in believing God all the more sad a sign of our inward depravity of nature. We can believe, for we believe in man! In the course of our lives we are fools enough to believe in men to our cost. In fact, it is not easy to rise out of this snare, and yet we are slow at heart to believe our God! Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, can we excuse ourselves? The Lord forgive and cleanse us! Let us henceforth accept every syllable of Gods Word as Infallible while we turn our unbelief towards man and his philosophies and infidelities!   
Is it not clear that we are slow of heart to believe since we judge this of others when they are mistrustful? When we see our Brethren in trial desponding and distrusting, we are very apt to think them needlessly dull and sinfully slow to grasp the promise. And yet, if we come into the same case, we are by no means better than they! That which we censure, we commit. The beam is in our own eye as well as the mote in our brothers eye. You have come home from visiting a friend who was distressed at heart and you have said, I cannot make her out, I have put the promises before her, but she is so foolish that she refuses to be comforted. Yes, and from this learn what you may be! Within a months time, you may be sinking in the same mire! An evil heart of unbelief is to be found in many a breast where its existence is least suspected.   
But if we see the folly of others, will we not confess our own? Dare we commit what we condemn? Did you ever say of Job, It was a pity that after all his patience, he spoke so bitterly and cursed the day of his birth? I wonder how many of us would have been any better than Job? I dare not hope that I should have been worthy to unloose the laces of his shoes. If I had been bereaved as he wasand tortured with the same burning boils and, worst of all, irritated by critics with their cruel candor and malignant sympathyI could not have behaved so grandly as he did. Let us not severely judge others. They ought to believe, of course. They ought to be more cheerful. They ought not to let their burdens crush them so completelybut when we, also, are tempted, shall we be so very much superior? I fear not! Let us see ourselves in the weakness of our Brothers and Sisters and confess that the Saviors Words are truewe are slow of heart to believe.   
There is another point in which we are very slow of heart to believe, namely, that we believe and yet do not believe. We must be very slow of heart when we say Yes, I believe that promise, and yet we do not expect it to be fulfilled! We are quick of mind to believe mentally, but we are slow of heart to believe practically. The very heart of our believing is slow. Our dear Friend, Mr. George Mueller, whom may God long preserve, says that one of his objectives in journeying about, at his advanced age, from Church to Church, is to try and lead Gods people to real faith in the promises of God. He says, As for 57 years I have seen how very little real trust in the living God there is, (generally speaking), even among true Christians, I have sought, in these, my missionary tours, particularly to strengthen their faith, because in the course of my pastoral labors, the blessed results of real confidence in God, on the one hand, have come to my knowledge, and the misery of distrusting Him, on the other.   
Mr. Muellers objective is a very desirable one, but what fools we must be that this should be necessary! There are plenty of people who believe God after a superfine kind of fashion up there on the edge of the moon, or, at the back of the north wind. But they do not believe the Lord in their shops, or on their beds, or in their kitchenthey cannot believe as to bread, cheese, house rent and clothes. They talk about believing in the Lord for eternity, but for this day and next week they are full of fear! True faith is everyday faith! The faith of the Patriarchs was a faith which dwelt in tents and fed sheep. We need a faith which will endure the wear and tear of lifea practical, realizing faith which trusts in God from hour to hour! Oh, to be delivered from shams and windbagsand to believe God as a woman believes her husband, or a child believes its father! I hear of writers of the realistic schoolwe need Believers of the realistic order! We need faith in which there is backbone and grit. We are sham Believers and so we lead sham lives. The promises of God speak to us as Jesus spoke to His disciples when He rose from the deadeach one cries, Handle Me and see. Gods Words are not chaff, but wheat! Not wind, but bread! We are slow of heart because, while we think we are believing all that God says to us, it often turns out that our believing is all a puff.

These two disciples must have been slow of heart to believe, again, because they had enjoyed so much excellent teaching and they ought to have been solid Believers. They had been for years with Jesus Christ, Himself, as a Tutor, but they had not learned the elements of simple faith. Oh, you say, they were very slow! Are not you the same? How many years have you been with Jesus? Perhaps for even 30 years, He has, Himself, taught you, has He not? Let me remind some of you of the remarkable events of your lives. What wonderful Providences you have seen! What singular deliverances you have experienced! What Divine upholding you have enjoyed! What heavenly consolations you have received! If you doubt the Savior, you may well be called, slow of heart to believe. After what you have experienced, my Brothers and Sisters, the shadow of a doubt should never fall upon you! Have you not said many times, in the flush of your gratitude for some signal favor, There, I can never doubt my Lord again? You were foolish when you made that boastful observation, but you are more foolish, still, for running back from it! You have passed through the Red Sea and with your timbrel in your hand you have sung unto the Lordand yet, perhaps, after a short marchyou have tasted the bitter waters of Marah and opened your mouth in murmuring! Only God is wiseand we are fools! He alone has understandingand we are slow of heart.   
Once more, these two disciples were very slow of heart to believe because there is so much in the Word which ought to have convinced them. See how the Savior puts itSlow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. What a mighty, all, that is! Brethren, are you half aware of the treasure hidden in the field of Scripture? Are you as familiar with your Bibles as you should be? If so, you will join with me in speaking of Scripture as having almost a redundancy of confirmatory testimony! There is rock enough here for us to build upon. We have here not only precept upon precept, but promise upon promiseand all these confirmed by pledge, oath, and Covenant of the Lord God Almighty! The teaching of Scripture is so full, so varied, so convincing, that we are, indeed, slow of heart if our faith is not firm and immovable.   
Brothers and Sisters, a lack of familiarity with the Word of God is very often the seed-plot of our doubts! Half our fears arise from neglect of the Bible. Our spirits sink for lack of the heavenly food stored up in the Inspired Volume. God forbid that you should fly to light literature to awaken your mind! Go to the solid literature of the promises and be established with food more suitable for an immortal soul. Like Luther, say, Come, let us sing a Psalm and drive away the devil. There is no enchantment for the casting out of evil spirits like a resort to the Divine Word. When you see more of what God has revealed, you will rise out of your doubts and fearsand your slowness of heart to believe will depart from you.   
Before I leave this point, I beg you to notice that the Savior does not say that they were hard of heart, but, slow of heart. I like to notice that. When He is most severe, He is still tenderly discriminating. Slow of heart we are, but there is no enmity in our heart towards Him. It is slowness and that is bad enough, but our Lord graciously helps our pace. Our face is in the right direction and our feet are going the right waybut we are slow in heart and lame in faith. As David spared Mephibosheth and admitted him to his table, though lame in both his feet, so the Lord loves us and communes with us, slow of heart though we are! It is bad to have a slow heart, very bad. But it would be much worse to have an unrenewed heart. With all our doubts and fears, we have no longer a heart of stone, but a heart of flesh which mourns because of its sinful unbelief. The Lord knows the difference between the sin of hating the Truth of God and the folly of doubting it. Strive against this slowness of heart, but still, let not Satan come in as an accuser and condemn you as though you were not a child of God at all.   
So there I leave it. There is the Masters gentle rebuke not meant to discourage you, but to encourage you. He calls you foolish in order that you may be so no longer. Believeand this shall be your wisdom.   
III. Will the Lords people kindly pray for me while I now speak to the unconverted? Ask that I may have God-speed while I try and speak to those who are seeking the Lord and have not yet believed in Him. I want to say to them just thisO foolish men and slow of heart to believe! Some of you are really seeking the Lord, but you say that you cannot believe though you long to. You are not like the spider, whose motto is, I get everything out of myself. You do not hope to spin salvation out of your own heartyou admit that salvation must be through faith in Christ. So far so good! But how is it that you do not at once believe? You say you cannot! How is it that you cannot believe in Jesus? He commands you to believe in Him and promises that you shall be saved! Trust Him and you shall live as surely as His Word is true.   
Listen! This unbelief proves you to be foolish and slow of heart, for there are other parts of His Word which you easily believe. If there is a threat or a condemnation, you believe it. If there is a text that speaks of judgment to come, you believe it. You have a quick eye for anything which reads hard and looks dismal. Have I not seen you reading the Word and stopping at a passage and saying, Alas, this makes my case hopeless. I have sinned the sin that is unto death? You believe in more than God has said, for you read your own thoughts into Gods Word and make it say more than it means! You are ready enough to take in the hard things, but the gracious promises of the loving Christ you will not believe. How can you justify this? How foolish you are! The promises are in the same Book as the threatsand if you believe the one, believe the other! Certainly the cheering Words come from the same Inspiration as the depressing ones if you believe that which looks dark, believe that which looks bright!   
Next, you are very foolish because your objections against believing are altogether poor and puerile. I think I have heard hundreds of them in my time, but out of all the objections raised by troubled souls against believing in Jesus, there is not one worthy of serious discussion. One man cannot believe in Jesus because he does not feel humble enoughas if that affected Christs power to save! If he felt more humbled, then he could believe in Jesus. Would not that be just believing in himself and trusting in his own humility instead of trusting in Christ? One man cannot believe in Christ because he is not like a certain great saint. Does he expect that he is to be like a great saint when he first comes to Christ? Has not Christ come to save sinners?   
Another says he cannot believe because he has not felt the terrors of the Law and the dread of Hell. Does he think that his terrors are to save him? Would his dreads and horrors help Christ to save him? Would he not be trusting his terrors and not Christ? The Lord Jesus says, Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth. The Gospel is to be preached to every creatureand every creature that believes it shall be saved! But these people back out of it and begin hammering out reasons for their own destruction! A sadly suicidal business this! Let the devil invent reasons for my not being savedit is not a business which can bring me any form of good. Nothing can stand against the promise of GodHe commands me to believe on His Son, Jesus, and I do believeand I am saved and shall be saveddespite all the objections which may be raised by carnal reason.  
Though you find it so hard to believe Christ, you have found it very easy to believe in yourself. Not long ago you were everybody and now you cannot believe that Christ is everybody. You thought you were very good. You were wonderfully easy in your own mind when you ought to have been afraid. What? Was it easy to believe your poor self and can you not believe the faithful Word of a good and gracious Savior who says that if you trust Him you shall be saved?  
Moreover, you are very apt, now, to believe Satan if he comes and says that the Bible is not true, or that Jesus will not accept you, or that you have sinned beyond hope, or that the Grace of God cannot save you. Of course you believe the Father of Liesand you go mourning and moping when you might at once go singing and dancing if you would believe your Savior! Jesus bids you trust and live! Satan says it is of no use your trustingyou believe Satanand treat your Lord as if He had intended to deceive you! O fools and slow of heart!   
Then you know how ready you are, you seekers, to stop short of Christ. If you hear a sermon and get a little melted and go home and pray a bit, you get quite easy and say, Now I am on the road. Why, your melting and your praying are not the road to Heaven! Jesus says, I am the way. You are not on the way till you get to Him. You have been in gracious company and singing holy hymns. You feel quite good and are highly pleased with yourselves. What right have you to be restful even for a moment? How dare you linger till you have reached the City of Refuge, which is Jesus Christ? Till you believe in Christ you have no right to a single moments peace, or hope, or joy! And yet you do get a sort of peace and a kind of hope which are only sparks of your own kindling which will die out in blackness. Because you are content to trust in something short of Christ, I say to youWhy not rest in Jesus? O fools and slow of heart! Refuges of lies you fly to, but the true refuge of the finished work of Jesus Christ you do not accept? Why is this?   
And then some of you are foolish and slow of heart because you make such foolish demands upon God. You would believe if you could hear a voice! If you could dream a dream! If some strange thing were to happen in your family. What? Is God to be tied to your fancies, that you will not believe Him unless He does this and that extravagant thing? If He chooses to bring some to Himself by extraordinary means, must He do the same with you, or else you prefer to be cast into Hell? Surely you are mad! Who are you that you are to dictate to the Lord and say He

shall do this, or that, or else you will refuse to believe Him? And so you will trample on the blood of Jesus and turn our back upon the Kingdom of Heaven unless an angel is sent to you, or you hear a voice from Heaven? O fools and slow of heart, to make these irrational demands upon the ever-blessed God!   
You are foolish and slow of heart because, to a great extent, you ignore the Word of God and its suitability to your case. If a soul in distress will take down the Bible and turn it over, he need not look long before he will light upon a passage which describes himself as the object of mercy. The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Does not that fit you? 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 return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Does not that fit you? Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Does not that apply to you? Why, if you will but look through the Word, you shall find passages so pertinent to your condition that, as a key fits a lock, they will seem made for you! Those two disciples did not, for a while, see how the Prophets met the case of the crucified and risen Christ. But as they did see it, their hearts burned within them. As you also see how God has provided for your condition in His Word, in His Covenant, in His Son, your sadness will flee away.   
I close with this one word of warning to those of you who are distressed in heart and are falling into the habit of looking for reasons why you should not believe in Christ. I do pray you to leave off this silly practice. Before this evil becomes chronic with you, quit it as a deadly thing. People can reason themselves down, but they cannot reason themselves up again. If you see a door open, in Gods name hasten in, for one of these days you may be so blind as never to see an open door again! Seize this opportunityand while Christ stands and says, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy ladencome along with you! If you sit down to argue against Christ, He may allow your conclusions to stand to your own destruction. Those who are so foolish as to find 20 unhallowed reasons today, will be foolish enough to find 200 such reasons next year! A man may act the cripple till he grows hopelessly lame. Mind what you are doing! You may lock a door and open it again for many a yearbut one of these days you may so hamper the lock that it will not open again. Oh, that you may at once believe in Jesus Christ unto eternal life!   
I have come to this pass myselfif I perish, I will perish believing in Jesus! If I must be lost, I will be lost clinging to His Cross! Can any man be lost there? No, fools and slow of heart though we may be, we know that none shall perish who come to Christ, for that would greatly dishonor the Saviors name. God bless you! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 24:13-35.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK676, PSALM 42 (VER. I ), 191.

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THE BLESSED GUEST DETAINED   
NO. 1655

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 23, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Then they drew near unto the village where they were going, and He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to stay with them. Luke 24:28, 29.**

WHAT a blessed walk was that from Jerusalem to Emmaus! Were they not highly favored men to have such a companion as the Lord Jesus, to hear Him converse upon such a subject and to feel their hearts burning within them with so Divine a flame? Brothers and Sisters, these are not the only men who have walked with the Lord Jesus. I trust I look into the eyes of full many who can say, We, too, have communed with the Son of the Highest. The eyes of our faith have seen Him and our ears have heard His voice. We have known that Jesus, Himself, drew near, and we have heard the Words of Holy Scripture as though they fell fresh from His lips, and thus they have, by the power of the Holy Spirit, burned in our hearts and made our hearts to burn like coals of juniper which have a most vehement flame.

Thank God, our Divine Master is still the familiar Friend of His disciples and our walk is with Him. In one sense, He is not here, for He is risen. But in another sense He is more peculiarly here because He has risen and, whereas, unrisen He could only have been in one place at a time, now that He is risen He is, by His Spirit, present with thousands of His people at the same moment and He walks not only from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but to many a village, through many a garden, along many a street! Jesus delights to manifest Himself to His peopleHe is not strange unto His own flesh. We are bound to bear witness to the fact that He is not ashamed to call us Brothers and Sisters and to be found walking with us.

Yes, even to those who are not His people, Jesus comes very near at times. And though they know Him not, He walks at their side and this not in silence, for He instructs them by His Word and makes their hearts warm by His sacred influence. I pray that any remark, this morning, which shall be made to Believers may also lay hold of those attentive hearers to whom the kingdom has come very near, for some of you have often been moved in this House of Prayer as you have heard Jesus speak, and speak to you! And if you have not been able to call Him, Friend, yet you have heartily wished you could do so. You have been more than half inclined to cast in your lot with His disciples because their Master has warmed your hearts, if He has not made them burnand if there has not been the glow of life, yet there have been many flickering desires. I pray that Jesus may never leave you, but that your intimacy with Him may be growing till at last you shall know Him and He shall know youand there shall be a union formed between you which never shall be broken.

To return to that walk to Emmaus. How short it must have seemed! By far too short for hearts so sad, who at every step found solace. I forget how many miles it was, just now. It does not matter. I should think it seemed as if it had scarcely begun when it endedwith such light feet they tripped over that pathway that they thought Emmaus had been attracted nearer to the city! It was so short because it was so sweet. The conversation was such as good men prize more than dainties. The intonations of that Voice must often have awakened memories within them which half compelled them to recognize their Lord!

His sweet voice must have charmed them and the words He uttered, the wondrous words of exposition and consolation, how much they enriched them! Nor was that walk more sweet than solemn, for it is no mean thing to walk with the risen Son of God! Kings might fling their crowns away to enjoy five minutes of such honorit was nothing less than sublime! Those Brothers must have often, during the rest of their lives, looked at each other and said, We walked with Jesus! I should think whenever they met, their conversation would have in it fresh recollections of that walk and each one would say to his fellow, Brother, I have just remembered a point whereon the Lord spoke to us. Do you not recollect the significant hint which He gave us as to the meaning of the Prophet?

If you and I had ever actually walked with Jesus, I am half afraid we might have grown proud of it. At any rate, if we were helped not to be proud, yet it would always be a sublime memory. How sublime a thing to have kept pace with Incarnate Deity and marched foot to foot with Him who is God over all, blessed forever! No angel has ever walked with Jesusthey cast their crowns before Him and fly upon His errandsbut He has not given unto angels the privilege of such familiar conversation. How solemn to those who all unwittingly had enjoyed it! I think when they knew Him, they must have been overwhelmed with the thought that they had been so near!

And they must have feared, in the silence of their souls, that possibly they had been rashly familiar. Surely they said, each one to Himself, Did we say anything improper? Was it this which made Him call us fools? When we were expressing our doubts, did we not grieve Him? Alas, that we should have so misbehaved ourselves! They must have looked back upon that high honor with great awe, even as Jacob did after he had communed with God at Bethel and said, Surely the Lord was in this place and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and the very gate of Heaven.

Brothers and Sisters, it is a great thing to come near to Christ! And you who have not yet believed in Him, I should like you to feel in what a solemn position you have sometimes been placed, when, He has been evidently set forth, crucified, among you! And you have felt somewhat of that Presence. Jesus does not draw near to a man for nothing. He has an influence upon all whom He visits. Your sense of His Presence has left upon you a deep responsibility, especially if you have remained chill under the influence of His holy love and have refused to believe in Him. Oh, that you would think of this! Before our Lord passes on and leaves you to your own devices, I would have you know that the King of Heaven has been very near to you! Oh that you would cry out to Him, nor cease the cry till He comes and abides with you!

I. This must suffice for an introduction. Oh that the Spirit of God may give the sermon! My subject runs thusFirst, observe in the text, COMPANIONS LIKELY TO PART. The walk had come to an end, for they had reached Emmaus where they were going and now the Master made as though He would have gone further. And so the holy talk was likely to end. Jesus is going on and they may never see Him again. The choicest of all conversations now draws to a close unless the Speaker can be induced to stop with the two favored travelers. We are told that our Lord Jesus would have gone further. He did not

pretend that He would have gone, but He was actually going. It is the way of Him not to stay anywhere unless He is invited and pressed. I know not where He would have gone, but with that glorified body of His, He was under no necessity of finding shelter!

He could have gone further and lodged elsewhere, or He could have suddenly returned to Jerusalem and in a moment have entered into the Apostles meeting room though the doors were shut. It would not have been the first night that

*Cold mountains and the midnight air*

*Witnessed the fervor of His prayer.*   
Certainly He would have gone further. He says not where, but He knew right well. Under the circumstances, He and His companions seemed likely to part. Now, observe the reason of parting. They were not about to separate because of any ill-will on the part of those who had walked with Him. No anger had broken outnothing that He had said had awakened any animosity very, very far from it! They felt an intense reverence for the unknown Stranger and sincere gratitude to Him for the charming words which He had addressed them. He was likely to have gone further, but not because of any argument between them.

Nor would they have parted because of any weariness of Him on their part. He had not talked away and tired them out so that they would be glad to see the back of Him. The rest of the narrative shows that they were in a very different condition of heart from that. If Jesus had gone further, they would have lost His delightful society through forgetfulness. Turning into his housefor I suppose one of them lived there and there does not appear to have been anybody else in the houseone of them spread the simple repast for his friend. And what if in his care about the evening meal he had forgotten to invite the wonderful Stranger? If Jesus had gone further, it would have been entirely because they forgot to invite Him, or failed to urge Him to stay! They could not have felt an utter indifference to Him, but they might have forgotten to press their hospitality upon Him.

Many have short memories when hospitality is concerned. Sometimes we have failed to invite a friend when he needed our kindnessand we have felt sorry for it afterwards. They might have supposed that if He went further, so important a Person was too great to tarry with them and, perhaps, so wise a Person had an errand further on which required immediate dispatch and, therefore, He could not remain with them. Thus they might have let Him go. Had they lost Him it would have been simply through forgetfulness and inadvertence. Brothers and Sisters, I hope there are very few of us, who love the Lord, who are likely ever to lose communion with Him through any weariness of Him, or distaste of Him.

Oh nothe happiest moments we have ever had have been spent in Jesus companyand we are never so blessed as when He opens the Scriptures to us and opens our hearts to receive them. But we are in danger lest in the press of worldly cares; lest in our frequent conversations with our fellow men; lest, even, in our attendances upon the domestic concerns of our own little home, we may forget to invite Jesus to abide with us! Communion with the Lord is more often broken by lack of thought than by lack of heart, though, alas, when the lack of thought has let Him, go further, then it has cooled down into that rock of ice which we have called a lack of heart. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, let us charge our hearts that we never forget to entertain the Savior.

Let this be our first thoughtthat we give Jesus a lodging in our souls. Be this our morning prayer, Abide with us. Be this our evening petition, Abide with us. Be this the prayer all day long, Abide with us. May we resolve that under no circumstances will we permit our souls to be at rest unless we rest in Him, or to be happy except He shall be our joy! You see, if the two disciples had lost our Lords company, it would have been simply through neglect. And if you and I lose Him, it may be through a neglect which we think excusable because we were so very busy and so intensely occupied. But this will not alter the fact, nor bring back our Lord. Oh do not let us treat Him so badly! Are there other objects beneath the sun or above the sun, on earth or in Heaven, that are worthy to come between us and Christ for a single moment? Will a wife treat her loving husband with coldness and then excuse herself that she had other matters on her hands? It may be so, but never, never let the Lords redeemed treat their Redeemer as though He might be left in any hole or corner till a more convenient time!

The point at which they were at all likely to part company with Christ is worth noting, for it may give us timely warning. It was, first, a point of change. They had been walking with Him and the journey was over. They had been out of doors, but now they have come to their house and are about to enter. Always there is a danger to us of missing fellowship with Christ at points of changeand especially at seasons of greatly altered circumstances. I do not wish, Brethren, that you and I should be often transplantedtrees do not flourish well when this happens to them. I knew a friend who appeared to be wedded to the Gospel and was zealous in promoting it when he was persecuted very severely by his father. His father died and he inherited the old mans propertyand from that hour he was not seen in his former placenor did he manifest any love to the Lord. This is sad.

I would hardly dare to pray for some men that they might have a change from persecution to prosperityplants that flourish amid ice and snow are burned up when placed beneath a tropical sun. I have known those who appeared to love their Master right heartily when they were poor! They have become rich and now where is their ardor? I hope they have not altogether cast off affection for the sacred name, but certainly the people with whom they once associated know nothing of them, now, and they are not engaged in those holy works in which they formerly delighted. How dare I pray for the temporal prosperity of those who would degenerate beneath its influence?

On the other hand, I have known many who once were in comfortable circumstances and when prosperous they appeared to walk with God. As far as we could judge, they were patterns of godliness. But they fell upon hard times and they grew poorer and poorer till they tasted the bitterness of needand now they say they do not like to be seen by those who knew them and, therefore, they stay away from the House of God. They have lost the comforts of religion when they most need them! They have lost worldly substance and, alas, lost fellowship with Christ as well! This is equally sad, for whether Jesus leaves us at the golden gate, or at the broken-down door of poverty, His departure is equally a calamity! I am mentioning facts. I give no names, but I have seen these things many times and, therefore, I have drawn this deduction, that at points of change there is danger. I suppose there is upon the railway a measure of peril at the switches where the train is turned upon another lineand it is certainly so on the main line to Glory. At all times it is well to watch, but especially when we are entering upon new duties, new trials, new temptations. Lord, let not the novelty of our position fascinate us even for a moment, but evermore You abide with us!

It was a point, too, where something had been accomplished. They had finished their journey and reached their homes. Oh, we are such poor things that we can hardly complete anything without being self-satisfied. As little a thing as a finished walk will exalt little minds. But if it is some greater work, the peril is increased. When Christ said, It is finished, He opened a river of comfort. But when we exclaim, I have finished it, we too often set our minds on fire with pride! Certain men have undertaken a work for Jesus and they have done it by the Holy Spirits blessingand now they feel so pleased with themselves and so satisfied that they are likely to spoil all and give their Lord occasion for grief! The lowly Jesus does not seek self-exalting companions! I have known Him go many a mile to speak with the contrite, and it is His delight to dwell with the brokenheartedbut with those who have done something and, therefore, feel that they do not further need His Presence, He soon parts company. Nothing drives Christ and holy angels out of a room like the foul odor of pride!

Then, dear Friends, they were now about to rest for a time. They had reached home and they looked for repose after the excitements of the week. They had been detained at Jerusalem by grand, yet terrible events, and one of them was glad, that day, to lodge in his own house. As for the other, he was glad to get out of the city and retire with his friend, for a little till good news should come from the Apostles. They both hoped for a little peace. Just then the Master made as though He would have gone furtherand when you and I are promising ourselves repose, such as we have known little of upon earthit is especially well, at such times, to ask the Master to abide with us!

When we are in the battle we are sure to beg Him to abide with us because He covers our head and we cannot live without Him. And when we are proceeding in a weary walk we are likely to pray Him to remain with us, for we are then leaning on our Beloved. But when we sit down upon the seat of ease, sleep too often creeps over us. Having put off our traveling sandals and stretched ourselves at easeah, then there is the possibility, the sad possibilityof the Masters going further while we take our rest. He is always going further and when we resolve to go no further, but to consider ourselves to have attained, then our Lord will soon be gone! We must not take the slogan of the famous statesman who has been so often laughed at for his finalitywe must not say, Rest and be thankful or we shall soon come to grief. If we fall into that vein, it is well to remember that just at such a point Jesus and the disciple are apt to break fellowship. I mention this that we may be wise in the hour of trial.

Now, had they parted company, the act would have been most blameworthy on their part. To have lost the society of such a Friend, how foolish! Here was One who had instructed them with tenderness and skill One who spoke as never man spokewould they let Him go? Here was One who evidently could explain their mysterious sorrows and take the sting out of their griefwould they let Him pass on? They had been fools, indeed, if they had done so! It would have shown that they did not appreciate His teaching, nor feel grateful for His opening to them the Scriptures. It would have been gross folly!

And yet there is another thought. It was toward evening, and night was lowering and, therefore, they said, Abide with us, for it is toward evening. It would have been very cruel to have allowed Him to journey on in the dark and the dews. Would we thus treat any friend of ours? Could we allow a beloved one to abide abroad all night? Was not that His own argument in the Golden Canticle, when He knocked and said, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled: for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night? It would have been inhospitable on their partinhuman for them to leave Him to continue His journey in the darkness of the gathering night when they had a home in which they could entertain Him!

And so I charge it upon my own soul to never let Jesus be left unhoused; a Stranger who has not where to lay His head! All hearts are cold in every place towards the Well-Beloved! It is a cold world for Jesus, today, even as at the time of His life below. Then, He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Let not that be said over, again, and said of us who are, in a more special sense, His own than were His brothers and sisters according to the flesh. Be you not forgetful to entertain strangers is a Gospel commandbut be you especially eager to entertain your Lord! Shall your Lord ever say to any of you who are called Christians, I was a stranger, and you took Me not in? Oh, no! Let us invite Him, beg Him, entreat Him, constrain Him to abide with us for His own dear sakeand let us give Him, in our warm hearts, the best entertainment that we can!

Surely we never received such a guest, before, and another such we shall never see again! Men are willing to give up their estates and houses for a time to entertain royaltythey reckon them to be increased in value when once a monarch has sojourned in themand shall not we be more than willing to open wide our hearts, minds and homes, that Jesus may enter and be entertained by us as the King of kings? There is something, then, to be learned from companions likely to part. May the Holy Spirit sweetly teach us!

II. Now, I change the scene, and notice, nextTHE GUEST NEEDING TO BE PRESSED. The guest is Jesus and He is about to go further. And He will go further unless they invite Him, yes, unless, according to the 29th verse, they constrain Him. It is a very strong word that, they constrained Him. It is akin to the one which Jesus used when He said, The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence. They not only invited Him, but they held Him, they grasped His hand, they tugged at His clothesthey said He should not go. They would not have itthe cold night should not accuse them of being churls. He should not go another yard along that dangerous roadthey must have Him for a guestand they would not take no for an answer!

Let us remember why this Guest needs constraining, and the first thought is, He could not very well have tarried, otherwise. If I were a stranger and walked along the road with two persons who did not know meif I were able to talk to them ever so instructivelyI should not think of intruding into their house when the conversation was over! You never see anything in Jesus approaching roughness or want of delicacyHe exhibits the manners of the noblest Man that ever lived! He does not force His acquaintance upon any, but He goes where He is constrained. Besides, what pleasure could it have been for Him or for them for Him to have lodged in their house if He had not been wanted? Without a welcome, few of us would care to accept a lodging. Jesus, therefore, naturally, because the other thing was scarcely feasible, waited till He was asked and even pressed. And had they not constrained Him, He would have gone further.

Remark that this is a characteristic of the Son of God at all times. I have not time, this morning, otherwise I could show you that all through the Old Testament as well as the New, when the Lord reveals Himself in any visible form, He has to be pressed before He will abide with any. The Lord came to Abraham and Abraham said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, pass not away, I pray You, from Your servant: let a little water, I pray You, be fetched, and wash Your feet, and rest Yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort Your hearts; after that You shall pass on: for therefore are You come to your servant (Gen. 18:3-5). Abraham constrains these wondrous guests, or otherwise they will pass on!

Look at chapter 19 and see what Lot did when two angels came to him. Even supposing these were nothing more than angels, they show the manners of the court of Heaven, so that it is an equally good illustration for me. He said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servants house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and you shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, No; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house (vs. 2, 3). Joseph was, in this, a type of Jesus, for you know how slow he seemed to reveal himself to his brothers, though all the while he was full of love to them. To Moses the Lord said, Let Me alone, and only by mighty pleading could the man of God prevail!

When an angel came to Manoah and his wife, to tell them about Samson, we find that He had to be detained, or else He would have departed speedily. And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord, I pray You, let us detain You, until we shall have made ready a kid for You. (Judges 13:15, 16). You see, the heavenly messenger needed to be detained, or He would have gone at once. And then comes in that instance of which you have already thought, when the angel said to Jacob, Let Me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let You go, except You bless me. It is clear that the Lord will be entreated of by the house of Israel to do good things for them. We shall have to cry

*In vain You struggle to get free,   
I never will unloose my hold!   
Are You the Man that died for me?   
The secret of Your love unfold:   
Wrestling, I will not let You go,   
Till I Your name, Your nature know.   
I know You, Savior, who You are,   
Jesus, the feeble sinners Friend;   
Nor will You with the night depart,   
But stay and love me to the end;   
Your mercies never shall remove   
Your nature and Your name is Love.*

We know that our Lord had a shy habitHe often withdrew Himselfand the multitude sought after Him. He walked upon the sea and they in the vessel saw Him and He would have gone by them, but they cried out to Him. The Syro-Phoenician woman, who sought for the healing of her daughter, found Him, at first, very cold to her, and only by the greatest faith did she win her desire! He needed earnest pressure before He yielded to her request.

The blind men cried unto Him for sight, but He passed on till louder and louder went up their piteous cries, and they held Him, for Jesus stood still. The nobleman, when he came about his son, pleaded with tears till he cried, Lord, come down before my child dies. It has been often so with our gracious Lord. He would not come until He saw that the desire for Him was intense. He gives us two parablesone tells us of the man in bed who must be awakened with many a knock and many a call before he would rise to give bread to his friend who sought it. The other parable is that of the unjust judge who must be wearied by the womans importunate entreaties before he will vindicate her cause. From all this you see it is the Masters habit to hold back till He is pressed and constrained.

If we must give a reason for this I would remind you of the jealousy of His Character. He is jealous of our love! He says, Give Me your heart, and so He pauses a while that He may see that we love Him and prize His benefits. Of old the Father said, The Lord your God is a jealous God, and Jesus, the Incarnation of the Divine Love, has told us that, love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave and, therefore, it is that He will not give His company to those who have no heart for it. You shall not have His smiles if the smiles of the world will do as well. If union with worldlings will please you as much as union with Him, you shall have none of His company! It is only when you languish for Him, sigh for Him and cry for Him that He will abide with you!

He has another reason and that is, His anxiety to do us good! He wisely wishes that we should value the mercy which He gives by being led to consider what a case we should be in if He did not give it. He stirs up our prayers and then answers themand so we get a double blessingthe prayers, themselves, being of much service to us, and then the answer being all the more a blessing! It was good to these two disciples to be allowed to be hospitable. It was good for them to rouse themselves to entreat Him. They valued the company of Jesus all the more when they had diligently persuaded Him to sit at their table and partake of their simple meal.

Now, Beloved, let us look at Jesus in this light, and say within ourselves, I am fearful lest I should do anything to excite His jealousy. And I am anxious to show my eager longing for His Presence lest He should think me unkind. I would not make Him go further and leave me, but I would hold Him fast, constraining Him to abide with me.

III. I have said that here was a Guest who needed pressingthere will be no necessity to enlarge upon the remark that here was A GUEST WORTH PRESSING. He was, indeed, worth pressing when we consider what He had done for them. He had given them comfort and instruction and He was worth detaining if only for that. Had they known Him they would have felt still more that they could not let Him go. Would they not have borne Him on their shoulders into the house and said, Good Master, we cannot think of letting You go, for You are He whom our souls loveour Master and our Lordover whom we have been mourning as one dead, and lo, You are alive? So much were they indebted to Him that they could not fail to make Him their guest!

They must press Him again, for how comfortless the house would have been without Him! I think I see those two disciples sitting down to their meal, supposing the Master had gone on. Suddenly, one would have remembered, and said, My heart feels heavy, now that He is gone. And the other would have said, How came it that we let Him go? Why did we not entreat Him to stay the night with us? Their meal would have half choked them! They would have gone to their beds and tossed about throughout a sleepless night if they had failed in hospitality to Him. This is what has happened to some of us when we have carelessly let our Lord slip away we have been like widows who have newly lost their husbandssore in heart and desolate.

Should the children of the bridegroom fast? Not while the bridegroom is with them! But if he is taken from them, then shall they fast. Better to have been outside in the open air, or to have gone further with the unknown Traveler, than to have been comfortably housed and to have treated Him ill. He was a Guest worth constraining to remain when we think of the vacuum there would have been if He had gone further! Besides, we know what they did not then know, that this unknown One would make Himself known to them, as He has done to us. Knowing Him, now, as they knew Him afterwards in the breaking of the bread, we ought to feel, we must feel, we do feel, that we cannot, will not let Him go, but will detain Him, for He is Christ our Lord!

I spoke at the beginning to some here who have never known our Lord and yet He has been very close to them frequently, in hearing sermons and the like. Dear Friends, I earnestly beseech you to receive Christ as a Stranger, and you shall soon know Him as a Friend! You only know of my Lord, that He makes you have the heartburn every now and then. And when we talk about Him, you go home very uncomfortable. How I wish that you knew Him better! Oh, that you would entertain Him, for then you would know His excellence! Bid Him come into your heart and He will be infinitely more to you than He is now.

You have no idea what He is. He seems a well-spoken Friend, but He will prove to be a Brother! He promises to instruct you, but He will love you, enrich you, and glorify you. Oh dear child of God, not yet wellinstructed, your eyes are weak and you see not Jesus as you shall see Him! Still, I pray you heartily entertain the Savior, even if your eyes are blind. Take Him in and let Him lodge with you, and you will know more and yet more of Him! You will know most of Him as you break your bread to the hungry, and so break it to Him. You will know more as you break the bread at the Communion Table and so commune with Him. Only remember, He is a Guest worth pressing, and be sure you do your best humbly, but earnestly, to detain Him!

IV. I close by telling you of AN ARGUMENT WITH WHICH TO HOLD HIM. Here it is in the text. They constrained Him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. My first way of using this text does not commend itself to my judgment, but yet it is necessary. All the commentators and preachers I have ever met with suppose that these disciples meant, by this argument, that it was dreary for themselves to be alone and, therefore, for their own comfort and protection, they begged the stranger to remain. I do not believe it for a moment! Still, that would have been a good argument with the tender-hearted Savior and if you and I cannot attain to anything else, let us use that plea.

It is toward evening with many of you. You are in affliction and the shadows thicken. Your light has departed and you are afraid. Sorrows come on like the darkness of night. You know not what approachesyou are heavy of heart. Ah, then that is a blessed prayer

*Fast falls the eventide!   
The darkness thickens:   
Lord, abide with me.*

You can bear any trouble with Christ. No adversities shall hurt you, no afflictions shall grieve your spirit if He is with you. Pray, therefore, this prayer, and no longer fear as you enter into the cloud. Or it may be that some of you are falling into depression of spirit through the loss of the Light of Gods Countenance. You are not as joyful a Christian as you used to be. The high felicities of your spirit have burned down and all is dim. Now is the time to say, Lord, abide with me. If I have no joy, still let me have Yourself. It is a blessed thing when a Believer does not set his affection so much upon the joy of the Lord as upon the Lord of his joywhen he says not only, Lord, I will rejoice in You while You smile, but cries with Job, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Better to have to do with a killing God than to have God gone!

So, cry, Lord, if I never get a smile from You; if I am never again cheered and comforted by You; if I never sing a hymn of gladness, yet still abide with me! Be near, even if I know it not. It was a beautiful expression of David, who often asked the Lord to shine upon him, when he said, In the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice. As much as to sayIf I have no light from Gods face, I will be glad to be hidden beneath His wings. Abide with me, then, even if my reason almost fails me, and my darkened soul dreads a yet more tremendous night. Abide with me, O Lord, even should my sorrow seal my eyes in death. Abide with me is a blessed prayer for those Believers who are getting aged. With them it is toward evening and the day is far spent. Now should they cry, Abide with me. Then will you sweetly go to your chamber and fall into your last, most blessed sleep, and obtain the fulfillment of yours prayer that you may be forever with the Lord.

I have used the text in this way because everybody has used it so, but I believe that these disciples meant it in quite another sense. They used the argument to detain Christ because it was evening, for His sakebecause the night was coming on and they could not think of His being out in it. They knew how heavy the Eastern dews are and so they pressed Him with thisAbide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. Let each one of us use that argument with our Lord even nowLord, the world has no entertainment for You! Unbelieving hearts give You no shelter. The self-righteous repel You from their doors. The worldly see no beauty in You; carnal hearts refuse You; every house is locked against You! Therefore come in and abide with me. Here is lodging for You! Come in, Blessed One, and stay with me. If You lack shelter in kings palaces, abide with me! If there is no room for You in the inn, yet come in here and find Yourself at home, for I shall count myself greatly honored by receiving You. Therefore, dear Master, abide with me.

How we ought to long to cheer the Blessed One with our love because He is still so despised and rejected everywhere else. Everywhere else they treat Him ill. O do not let Him be wounded in the house of His friends! If He had 50 houses to go to, I might say, Lord, they can give You better entertainment than lies in my power. But when it is toward evening and no other door is open, Lord come into my poor cottage! I will set all that I have before You and be Your willing servant. That is the plea!

Another form of the plea is this. The ages are growing old and dark. What a plea that is for the Church to put up now, for the coming of her Lord. O Lord, it is toward evening, the worlds sun is setting. It is nearly 1,900 years since you ascended and still, the world lies in the Wicked One! Lord, come to Your Church! Come and abide with her, for as the world grows old, good Master, a chill night comes on and the love of many waxes coldand there are some that turn aside who once ran well. Dire evils walk abroad in the dark and blasphemy and rebuke are rife! Good Master, come unto Your Church and dwell in her, and find, there, Your home!

And the night of all nights is coming on, even the end of the world. We know not when, but we know we are getting nearer to it every day. Earths day is far spent. Her day of mercy comes toward its eventide and the night draws on, therefore, Master, come and abide with us, that we may win the world for you. Come, come that we may convert the heathen to Your Cross and that You may have them for Your inheritance. It is with Your Church that You will do this! Come, then, and abide with her ministers and her missionaries, and all her living membership, that yet the prophecies may be accomplished and Your purpose may be fulfilled! And Your reward may be the salvation of Your own.

Is not that a good missionary text, after all, a blessed prayer with which to begin this missionary weekAbide with us for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent? In the Romish church there is a chant which they use from Easter to the day of Ascension, and though I care nothing for liturgies or anything of the sort, yet it is certainly a suggestive canticle. The first line of the chant is

*Abide with us. Hallelujah.*

And the next is  
*For it is toward evening,   
And the day is far spent. Hallelujah.*

With that I close. May we use that argument well, until our Lord shall, in very deed, abide with us!   
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EYES OPENED   
NO. 681

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 18, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. Genesis 21:19.   
And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. Luke 24:31.**

The Fall of man was most disastrous in its results to our entire being. In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die, was no idle threat, for Adam did die the moment that he transgressed the commandhe died the great spiritual death by which all his spiritual powers became then and evermore, until God should restore them, absolutely dead. I said all the spiritual powers, and if I divide them after the analogy of the senses of the body, my meaning will be still more clear.

Through the Fall the spiritual taste of man became perverted so that he puts bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. He chooses the poison of Hell and loathes the bread of Heaven. He licks the dust of the serpent and rejects the food of angels. The spiritual hearing became grievously injured, for man naturally no longer hears Gods Word but stops his ears at his Makers voice. Let the Gospel minister charm ever so wisely, yet the unconverted soul, like the deaf adder, hears not the charmers voice. The spiritual feeling by virtue of our depravity is fearfully deadened. That which would once have filled the man with alarm and terror no longer excites emotion.

Even the spiritual smell with which man should discern between that which is pure and holy and that which is unsavory to the most High has become defiled. Now mans spiritual nostrils, while unrenewed, derive no enjoyment from the sweet savor which is in Christ Jesus but seeks after the putrid joys of sin. As with other senses so is it with mans sight. He is so spiritually blind that things most plain and clear he cannot and will not see. The understanding, which is the souls eye, is covered with scales of ignorance and when these are removed by the finger of instruction, the visual orb is still so affected that it only sees men as trees walking.

Our condition is thus most terrible, but at the same time it affords ample room for a display of the splendors of Divine Grace. We are so naturally and entirely ruined, that if saved, the whole work must be of God, and the whole Glory must form the head of the Triune Jehovah. There must not only be a Christ lifted up of whom it can be said, There is life in a look at the crucified One, but that very look, itself, must be given to us or else in vain should Christ hang upon the Cross!

I. Taking Hagars case first, I shall address myself this morning to certain unconverted ones who are in a hopeful condition.   
1. Taking Hagars case as the model to work upon, we may see in her and in many like her a preparedness for mercy. In many respects she was in a fit state to become an object of mercys help. She had a strong sense of need. The water was spent in the bottle, she herself was ready to faint and her child lay at deaths door. This sense of need was attended by vehement desires. It is a very hard thing to bring a sinner to long after Christso hard that if a sinner does really long and thirst after Jesus the Spirit of God must have been secretly at work in his soul, begetting and fostering those desires.   
When the invitation is given, Ho, every one that thirsts, you can honestly say, That means me. That precious Gospel invitation, Whoever will, let him come, is evidently yours, for you will it eagerly and vehemently. The Searcher of all hearts knows that there is no objection in your heart either to be saved or to the way of being savedno, rather you sometimes lift your hands to Heaven and say, O God, would that I might say, Christ for me! You know that the water of life is desirableyou know more than thatyou pine with an inward desire to drink of it. Your soul is now in such a state that if you do not find Jesus you never will be happy without Him. God has brought you into such a condition that you are like the magnetized needle which has been turned away from the pole by the finger of some passerby, and it cannot rest until it gets back to its place.   
Your constant cry is, Give me Christ! Give me Christ, or else I die! This is hopeful, but let me remind you that it, alone, will not save you. The discovery of a leak in a vessel may be preparatory to the pumping of the ship, and to the repair of the leakbut the discovery of the leak will not of itself keep the boat afloat. The fact that you have a fever is well for you to know, but to groan under that fever will not restore you to health. To desire after Christ is a very blessed symptom, but mere desires will not bring you to Heaven! You may be hungering and thirsting after Christ, but hungering and thirsting will not save you! You must have Christ! Your salvation does not lie in your hungering and thirsting, nor in your humbling, nor in your prayingsalvation is in Him who died upon the Crossand not anything in you.   
Like Hagar you are humbled, and brought to despair. There was a time when you did not admit your need of a Savior. You found comfort enough in ceremonies, and in your own prayers, repentances, and so on. But now the water is spent in your bottle and you are sitting down with Hagar wringing your hands and weeping in despaira blessed despair! God bring you all to it! Despair is next door to confidence in Christ! Rest assured, until we are empty Jesus will never fill us! Until we are stripped He will never clothe us! Until self is dead Christ will not live in us!   
It is quite certain that in Hagars case the will was right enough with reference to the water. It would have been preposterous, indeed, to say to Hagar, If there is water are you willing to drink? Willing? she would say, look at my parched lips, hear my dolorous cries, look at my poor panting, dying child! How can you ask a mother if she is willing to have water while her babe is perishing for thirst? And so with you. If I were to propose to you the question, Are you willing to be saved? you might look me in the face and say, Willing? Oh Sir, I have long passed beyond that stage! I am panting, groaning, thirsting, fainting, dying to find Christ! If He would come to me this morning I would not only open both the gates of my heart and say, Come in, but the gates are opened now before He comes. And my soul is saying, Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come to His seat!   
All this is hopeful, but I must again remind you that to will to be rich does not make a man rich, and that to will to be saved cannot in itself save you. Panting after health does not restore the sick man though it may set him upon using the means, and so he may be healed. And with you, your panting after salvation cannot save youyou must get beyond all this to the great Physician Himself.   
2. In the second place, mercy was prepared for Hagar, and is prepared for those in a like state. There was water. She thought it was a wilderness without a drop for her to drink, but there was water. Troubled Conscience, there is pardon! You think it is all judgment, thunder and thunderbolts, curses and wrath, but it is not so. There is mercy! Jesus died. God is able justly to forgive sinners. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. He is a God ready to pardon, ready to forgive! There is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared. There is water, there is mercy. What is more, there is mercy for you! There is not only that general mercy which we are bound to preach to every creature, but for many of you whom I have described I am persuaded that there is special mercy.   
Your names are in His Book. He has chosen you from before the foundation of the world, though you do not know it. You shall be Hisyou ARE His! The hour is not far distant, when, washed in the fountain and made clean, you shall cast yourselves at the Saviors feet and be His captives in the bonds of love forever. There is mercy for you now if you trust Jesus!   
The water was not created as a new thing to supply Hagars thirstit was there already. If she could have seen it she might have had it before, but she could not see it. There is mercy, there is mercy for you. All that is wanted is that you should see it, poor troubled Conscience, and if you could have seen it there would have been no necessity whatever that you should have been so long a time as you have been in despair, and doubt, and fear. The water was near to Hagar, and so is Christ near to you. The mercy of God is not a thing to be sought for up yonder among the stars, nor to be discovered in the depthsit is near you, it is even in your mouth and in your heart!   
The Savior who walked along the streets of Jerusalem is in these aisles and in these pewsa God ready to forgive, waiting to be gracious. Do not think of my Master as though He had gone up to Heaven out of your reach and had left no mercy behind Him. Let Him tell you that He is as near in spirit now as He was to the disciples when He spoke to them at Emmaus. Oh that you could see Him! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is passing by! Cry to Him, you blind man, and you shall receive your sight! Call to Him, you deaf! Speak, even you whose lips are dumb His ears can hear your souls desires! He is nearonly believe in His Presence and trust His Graceand you shall see Him.  
It is a notion abroad that the act of faith is very mysterious. Now faith, so far as it is an act of man, (and an act of man it most certainly is, as well as the gift of God, for with the heart men believe), is one of the simplest acts of the human intellect. To trust Jesus, to lean with the soul upon Himjust as with my body I am leaning on this railto make Him all my confidence and all my rest needs no learning, no previous education. It needs no straining or mental effort. It is such an action that the babe and the suckling may glorify God by it!   
The faith of Sir Isaac Newton, with all his learning, is not a whit more saving or less simple than the faith of the child of three years old, if brought to rest on Christ alone. The moment the dying thief looked to the Crucified and said, Lord remember me, he was as saved as Paul, when he could say, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I am very anxious to be understood, and therefore I am trying to speak very simply, and to talk right home to those whom I am driving at.   
My own case is to the point. I was for some few years, as a child, secretly seeking Jesus. If ever heart knew what the bitter anguish of sin was, I did. And when I came to understand the plan of salvation by the simple teaching of a plain, illiterate man, the next thought I had after joy that I was saved, was thisWhat a fool I was not to trust Jesus Christ before! I concluded that I never could have heard the Gospel, but I think I was mistaken. I think I must have heard the Gospel thousands of times, but did not understand it. I was like Hagar with my eyes closed. We are bound to tell you every Sunday that trusting Jesus Christ is the way of salvation, but after you have heard that 50,000 times, you really will not even understand what we mean by it till the Spirit of God reveals the secret.

But when you do but know it and trust in Jesus, simply as a child would trust his fathers word, you will say of yourself, How could it be? I was thirsty with the water rippling at my feet! I was famishing and perishing for hunger, and the bread was on the table! I was fretting as though there were no entrance into Heaven, but there stood the door wide open right before me, if I could but have seen it! Trust Christ, and He must save you. I will improve upon it: Trust Him, you are saved. The moment you begin to live by faith in His dear Son, there is not a sin left in Gods book against you!  
3. We pass on, then, in the third place, to notice that although Hagar was prepared and mercy was prepared, yet there was an impediment in the way for she could not see the water. There is also an impediment in your way. Hagar had a pair of bright beaming eyes, I will be bound to say, and yet she could not see the water. And men may have first-rate understandings, but not understand that simple thingfaith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You do not suffer so much from lack of power to understand faith as from a kind of haze which hovers over your eyes to prevent their looking into the right place. You continue to imagine that there must be something very singular for us to feel in order to have eternal life.   
Now this is all a mistake! Simple trust in Jesus has this difficulty in itit is not difficultand therefore the human mind refuses to believe that God can intend to save us by so simple a plan. What blindness is this! So foolish and so fatal! Is not this ignorance partly caused by legal terrors? Master Bunyan, who had a keen insight into spiritual experience, says that Christian was so troubled with the burden on his back that in running he did not look well enough to his steps. Therefore, being much tumbled up and down in his own mind, as he says, he also tumbled into the Slough of Despond. You may have heard the thunder of Gods Law so long that you cannot hear anything so soft and sweet as the invitation of the loving Jesus. Come and welcome! Come and welcome! is unheard because of the din of your sins.   
The main reason I think why some do not attain early to peace is because they are looking for more than they will get and thus their eyes are dazzled with fancies. You who dare not take Christ because you are not a full-grown Christian, be content to be a babe first! Be satisfied to go through the seed state, and the blade state, and the ear state, and then you will get to be the full corn in the ear! Be content to begin with Christ and with Christ, alone. I verily believe some of you expect that you will experience a galvanic shock, or a superhuman delirium of horror. You have an idea that to be born-again is something to make the flesh creep or the bones shiveran indescribable sensation, quite out of the compass of human feeling.   
Now believe, that to be born-again involves the ending of superstition and living by feeling, and brings you into the world of plain and simple truth where fools need not err. Whoever believe in Him is not condemned. If you can understand that and claim it as your own, you are born-again. But though you should understand all human mysteries, if you are not born-again you could not truly understand that simplest of all teachings, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.   
Again, I am afraid some persons with the water at their feet do not drink it because of the bad directions that are given by ministers. When a minister closes up an address to the unconverted with this exhortation Now, my dear Friends, go home and pray, that is a very right exhortationbut it is given to the wrong people, and in the wrong place. I do not say to you this morning, I dare not say to you, as though it were the Gospel message, Go home and pray. I hope you will pray! But there is another matter to come before prayer, namely, faith in Jesus!  
When Christ told His disciples to go and preach the Gospel to every creature, He did not say to them, He that prays shall be saved, though that would be true if he prayed aright. But Christ said, he that believes shall be saved. Your present duty is not praying, but believing. You are to look to Jesus Christ upon the Cross just as the poor serpent-bitten Israelites looked to the bronze serpent and lived. Your praying will not do you a farthings worth of good if you refuse to trust Jesus Christ. When you have trusted Jesus Christ prayer will become your breath, your native airyou will not be able to live without it! But prayer, if put in the place of a child-like trust in Jesus, becomes an antichrist.   
It is not going to places of worship, or Bible reading which saves. I am not depreciating these duties but I am putting them in their proper position. It is depending upon the Lord Jesus Christ alone which is the true vital act by which the soul is quickened into spiritual life. If you, trusting in Christ, do not find peace and pardon, the Gospel which I preach is a lie and I will renounce it! But then the Bible would be false, also, for it is from that Book my message comes. This is the Gospel which we have received and which Christ has sent us to preachthat whoever believes in Him is not condemned.   
Now why do you hurry about after this and that? Why follow this mans and that mans directions? Why look to your baptism and confirmation? Why do you go about to your Church-goings and your Chapel-goings, your Bible-readings and your praying, your good works about this and about the otherthey are all but dross and dung if you put them in the place of Christ! But Christ Jesus, if you rest on Him, is precious, and after your receive Him, your works and your prayers shall become precious, too, because they will be performed through faith in Him. But until you come to Him, they are all nothing and vanityunacceptable in the sight of God because you put them into the place which should be occupied by the Savior.   
4. I feel certain that there are some here upon whom the Lord intends to work this morningso we will speak, in the fourth place, upon the Divine removal of the impediment. Hagars blindness was removed by God. No one else could have removed it. God must open a mans eyes to understand practically what belief in Jesus Christ is. That simple Truth of Godsalvation by trust in Jesus Christstill remains a point too hard to be seen. Until the whole power of Omnipotence is made to bear upon the intellect man does not really comprehend it!   
But while this was Divinely removed, it was removed instrumentally. An angel spoke out of Heaven to Hagar. It matters little whether it is an angel or a manit is the Word of God which removes the difficulty. Dear Friend, I pray that the Word of God may remove your unbelief. May you see today the light of Jesus Christ by simply trusting Him! I believe there are some who are saved who still are afraid they will be lost. I have heard of a butcher who, at his work, was accustomed to put his candle in a little candlestick which was tied by a belt around his forehead. One day he needed his candle in his hand and he looked all around his slaughterhouse for it by the light of the candle on his forehead. He looked about everywhere to fine it and, of course, he could not have looked at all if he had not had the light which he looked for already! Many a man is looking within himself to see the evidence of Divine Grace when his anxiety and the very light by which he looks ought to be sufficient evidence. I hope there are many of you who are just on the verge of salvation without knowing it.   
I looked last Friday night at a very remarkable sightthe burning of a huge rug factory. I was returning home from my Masters work, when I saw a little blaze, and in an incredibly short time a volume of fire rolled up in great masses to the skies! Why did it blaze so suddenly? Why, because for months before many men had been busily employed in hanging up the rugs and saturating the building in combustible materials. I do not mean with the intention of starting a fire, but in the ordinary course of their work. And in due time, when the first spark came it immediately grew into a great sheet of flames.   
So, sometimes, when the Gospel is faithfully preached, a sinner gets present peace and pardon and he is so full of joy that his friends cannot make him out, his progress is so rapid. But remember that God has been mysteriously at work months before in that mans heartpreparing his soul to catch the heavenly flame so that there was only a spark needed and then up rolled the flames to Heaven! Oh that I could be that spark to some heart in whom God has been working this morningby HE alone can make me so! I noticed when that factory was on fire from top to bottom that it seemed to glow like pure gold, or like transparent glass, and then I expected to see it fall and, by-and-by, fall it did, for after about halfan-hour, all of a sudden, one timber went over and the whole mass fell with a tremendous crash!   
I venture to compare that final crash with the actual salvation of a soul long prepared, by Gods Grace, to receive it. The heart has been glowing with a Divine desire, a heavenly flame for even months and years, and then, at last, and in a moment, the final movement is madeand doubts and fears and sins fall to the groundand there is room to build a Temple for the living God. May it be so with you this morning!   
There has been much preparatory work in you, for you are brought to long after a Savior and you are desirous to be saved by Him. There He is! Take Him! Take Him! The cup of water is put before you. Drink it! No need to wash your mouth first, or to change your garments. Drink it at once! Come to Jesus as you are!   
**Come and welcome, sinner, come!**   
II. Oh that the Spirit of God would give me power from on high while I try to talk to the saints from the second casethat of the disciples in Luke 24:31. This is no Hagar, but Cleopas and another disciples. And yet these two suffered under the same spiritual blindness as Hagar, though not, of course, in the same phase of it. Carefully observe the case of these disciples, for I believe it is often our own.

They ought to have known Jesus for these reasons. They were acquainted with Him. They had been with Him for years in public and in private. They had heard His voice so often that they ought to have remembered its tones. They had gazed upon that marred face so frequently that they ought to have distinguished its features. They had been admitted into His privacy and they ought to have known His habits. That Savior walking there ought not to have been incognito to them though He was to the rest of men.   
So it is with us. Perhaps you have not found Jesus Christ lately. You have been to His table and you have not met Him there. You are in a dark trouble this morning, and though He says, It is I, be not afraid, yet you cannot see Him there. Brothers and Sisters, we ought to know Christ! We ought to discover Him at once. We know His voice. We have heard Him say, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. We have looked into His face. We have understood the mystery of His grief. We have leaned our head upon His bosom. Some of you have had an experience of fifteen or twenty years, some of forty or fifty yearsand yet, though Christ is near, you do not know Him this morningand you are saying, Oh that I knew where I might find Him!   
They ought to have known Him because He was close to them. He was walking with them along the same road. He was not up on a mountain at a distance. Even then they ought to have known Himbut He was there in the same way with them! And at this hour Jesus is very near to us, sympathizing with all our griefs.   
*In every pang that rends the heart,   
The Man of Sorrows has His part.*   
He bears and endures with us still, though now exalted in Glorys Throne in Heaven. If He is here, we ought to know Him. If He is close to His people every day and in all their affliction is afflicted, we ought to perceive Him. Oh, what poor vision is this, that Christ should be near, our own well-beloved Redeemer, and yet we should not be able to detect His Presence!   
They ought to have seen Him because they had the Scriptures to reflect His Image, and yet how possible it is for us to open that precious Book and turn over page after page of it and not see Christ. They talked concerning Christ from Moses to the end of the Prophets, and yet they did not see Jesus. Dear Child of God, are you in that state? He feeds among the lilies of the Word and you are among those lilies, and yet you do not see Him? He is accustomed to walk through the glades of Scripture and to commune with His people, as the Father did with Adam in the cool of the day, and yet you are in the garden of Scripture but cannot see your Lord though He is there and is never absent?   
What is more, these disciples ought to have seen Jesus, for they had the Scriptures opened to them. They not only heard the Word, but they understood it. I am sure they understood it, for their hearts burned within them while He spoke with them by the way. I have known what it is, and so have you, to feel our hearts burn when we have been thinking of the precious Truth of God, and yet we have said, Oh that I could get at Him! You have heard of election, and you have wondered to yourself whether you should ever see again the face of Gods first elect One. You have heard of the Atonement, and the mournful story of the Cross has ravished you. You have gone from page to page of Scripture doctrine and have received it and felt its influence, and yet that best of all enjoyments, communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, you have not comfortably possessed.   
There was another reason why the disciples ought to have seen Him, namely that they had received testimonies from others about Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yes, and certain women of our company, which were early at the sepulcher, made us astonished. For when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. There He was close to them. Oh, it is so strange that in the ordinances of Gods house Jesus should be there, and yet in sad intervals our hearts should get so cold and so worldly that we cannot see Him!   
It is a blessed thing to want to see Him, but oh, it is better still to see Him. To those who seek Him He is sweet. But to those who find Him, He is dear beyond expression! In the Prayer Meeting you have heard some say, If ever I loved You, my Jesus, tis now, and your hearts burned within you as they thus spoke, and yet you could not say the same yourself. You have been up in the sick-chamber, and you have heard the dying saint sing   
You have envied that dying saint because you could not just then feel the same confident love.   
Well this is strange, passing strangeit is amazinga present Savior, present with His own disciples who have long known Him and who long to see Himand yet their eyes are shut so that they cannot discover Him. Why do we not see Him? I think it must be ascribed in our case to the same as in theirs, namely, our unbelief. They evidently did not expect to see Him, and therefore they did not discover Him. Brethren, to a great extent in spiritual things we shall get what we expect. The ordinary preacher of the Gospel does not expect to see present conversions and he does not! But there are certain Brethren I have known who have preached with the full faith that God would convert souls and souls have been converted!   
Some saints do not expect to see Christ. They read the life of Madame Guyon and her soul-enchanting hymns, and they say, Ah, this was a blessed woman. They take down the letters of Samuel Rutherford, and when they read them through, they say, Enchanting epistles! A strange, marvelously good man was this. It does not enter into their heads that they may be as Madam Guyon and that they may have as much nearness to Christ, and as much enjoyment as Samuel Rutherford! We have got into the habit of thinking the saints gone by stand up in elevated niches for us to stare at them with solemn awe, and fancy that we can never attain to their elevation.   
Brothers and Sisters, they are elevated, certainly, but they beckon us to follow them, and point to a something beyond! They invite us to outstrip them, to get greater nearness to Christ, a clearer sense of His love, and a more ravishing enjoyment of His Presence. You do not expect to see Christ, and therefore you do not see Him. Not because He is not there to be seenbut because your eyes are shut through your unbelief! I do not know any reason why we should not be full of joy this morningevery believing soul among us.   
Why hang those harps on the willows, Beloved? You have a trial, you say. Yes, but Jesus is in it! He says, When you pass through the rivers, I will be with you, the floods shall not overflow you. Why not rejoice then, since the dear Shepherd is with you? What matters it though there are clouds? They are full of rain when He is there, and they shall empty themselves upon the earth. Up, my Brothers and Sisters, up! With everything that may discourage and cast you down, you have 10 times as much to encourage and life you up! He love you and gave Himself for you. His blood has cleansed you. His righteousness has clothed you. His Grace has decked you with jewels. This world and the world to come are yoursand Christ who is better than both worldsis yours forever and ever! Take down those harps and strike the strings with glad fingersand wake them into melodies of joy!   
Now, dear Friends, I am sure it is the duty of every Christian, as well as his privilege, to walk in the conscious enjoyment of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be that you came here on purpose that you might begin such a walk. The disciples had walked a long way without knowing Christ, but when they sat at His table it was the breaking of bread that broke the evil charm, and they saw Jesus clearly at once. Do not neglect that precious ordinance of the breaking of bread! There is much more in it than some suppose. Sometimes when the preaching of the Word affords no joy, the breaking of bread mightand when reading the Word does not yield consolationa resort to the Lords Table might be the means of comfort.   
It may even happen that some other neglected means may be that which God intends to bless to your soul. I am afraid many of Gods servants are in darkness because they have neglected known duties. The windows of Christs palace are many, and He would not have one of them blocked up. And if you block up one window, it may be that He will say, I will never show My face at any but that. I will make My servants take down that shutter, that the Light of God may shine through. There is nothing in any ordinance of itself, but there may be much sin in your neglecting it. There is nothing, for instance, in the ordinance of Believers Baptism, and yet, knowing it to be a prescribed duty in Gods Word, it may be that the Lord will never give you a comfortable sense of His Presence till you yield to your conscience in that matter. But, waiving all that point, what you want is to see Him! Faith alone can bring you to see Him. Make it your prayer this morning, Lord, open my eyes that I may see my Savior present with me. And after once seeing Him may I never let Him go. From this day forth may I begin, like Enoch, to walk with You, and may I continue walking with You till I die, that I may then dwell with You forever.   
I find it very easy to get near to God compared with what it is to keep near. Enoch walked with God 400 years! What a long walk that was! What a splendid journey through life! Why should you not begin, dear Christian Brothers and Sisters, today, if you have not begun, and walk with God through the few years which remain? What if God should spare you for 40 years? I do not see that there is any necessity that your communion with God should be broken from now till death or the Lords coming. Yes, you say, you talk in a Utopian fashion! Perhaps I do, but I believe that hightoned Christian experience is, to a great extent, what common Christians think to be out of their reach.

Oh to get up above yon mists which dim the valley! Oh to climb the mountains top which laughs in the sunlight! Oh to get away from the heavy atmosphere of worldliness and doubt, of fear, of care, of fretfulnessto soar away from the worldlings who are always earth-hunting, digging into its mines and prying after its treasuresand to get up there where God dwells in the innermost circle of heavenly seclusionto get where none can live but men who have been quickened from among the dead! Where none can walk but men who are crucified with Christ, and who live only in Him! Oh to get up there where no more question concerning our security can molest us! Where no carking care can disturb because all is cast upon the Lord and rests wholly with Him! Oh to live in such an entireness of confidence and child-like faith that we will have nothing to do with anything except with serving Him and showing forth the gratitude we owe to Him who has done so much for us!   
Get up, Believers! Get up to your high mountain! Leave your dunghills and assume your thrones! Cast off your sackcloth! Throw away your ashes and put on your scarlet apparel! Christ has called you to fellowship with Himself, and He is no longer in the graveHe is risen! Rise! He is ascended! Ascend with Him and learn what this means, He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!   
I know you will say you cannot see this. However, it is theremost surely there! It is just the same as in Hagars case, with youthe same but with a difference. The fullness of fellowship with Christ is attainable! It is close to you and if you have your eyes opened to see it, as it has been given you to see Jesus as your Savior, you may rejoice w with a joy unspeakable and full of glory! God do so to you and more, also, according to His Covenant goodness in Christ Jesus. Amen and Amen.

*I will love You in life, I will love You in death, And praise You as long as You lend me breath; And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow, If ever I loved You, my Jesus, tis now.*

PORTIONS SOF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON GENESIS 21:9-19; LIKE 24:13-31   
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PEACE BE UNTO YOU   
NO. 3456

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 2, 1878.

**And as they thus spoke. . .Peace be unto you.   
Luke 24:36.**

WE like to know how a person used to act, for we think we can infer from that how he will act. That is not always correct, however, for men change. But in our Saviors case, if we study His life, we may very well infer from what He did, what He will do, because He never changes! And this is a comfortable reflection for us at this time, that in the days of His flesh, while He was yet on earth, He loved the company of His people! If He changes not, then He still loves the company of His people. He did reveal Himself, then, to one. He will still speak comfortable words to His people when they are alone. One by one will He reveal Himself to them. He did speak graciously to two. Where Christians converse on holy things, they may still expect that Jesus will Himself draw near. But more frequently He lingered longest and revealed Himself most in the assembly of His people. Where the eleven were met, where many were gathered together, there the Savior came, not once, but twice and often. Learn, then, that we may expect Him here tonight! Peter, and James, and John are representatively here. Here, too, we have some of the goodly womenthe Marys and Marthas are here. They are waiting for Him. Their hearts are longing for Him. He is the same now as always. Brothers and Sisters, we may expect Him! He will come to His old haunts. He will come and deal with His people as He did before. Twice, at least, we have it on record that our Savior came to His disciples when they were met on the first day of the weekfrom which I gather another comfortable thought, that as this is the first day of the week, we may for another reason expect Him to be here, to put honor on what now is the Lords Day. He, at least twice, for so it is on record, came to His disciples and, standing in their midst, said, Peace be unto you. On this first day of the week, this Lords-Day, at eventide I trustI hope, no, I expect, that you will feel Him here, and I pray that to each one of His people those soft words may come with Divine Power, Peace be unto you.

Without further preface than these words, let us draw your attention first, to what He said. Secondly, when He appeared to say it. And thirdly, of what came of His appearance at the saying of it.

I. OUR LORDS GRACIOUS SPEECH.   
What did He say? He said, Peace be unto youfour words, each full of meaning. May I not view those words in four lights? Was it not first a salutation and benediction? Thus He introduced Himself, Peace be unto you. It was His good wishmore, it was His fervent prayer! He breathed peace upon them expressive of His goodwill, His love, His intense desire for their highest good. Peace is the highest gift He can impart. Said the Apostle, Grace, mercy, and peace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ. He had given them Grace and mercyHe now gives them the highest benediction, peace! Did He not mean more than that? In a second light it was a benediction. Peace be unto you. He had been into the invisible world and He had returned from itand He tells them that there was peace reserved for them. He had passed the veil with His own blood. He had offered up His Sacrifice. He had said, It is finished. He had received the token that it was finished by His being raised from the dead. And now He comes to them with the marks of His Crucifixion still upon Him, and He tells them there is peaceit is doneThe war is over, the conflict is concludedMy bloody Sacrifice and glorious Resurrection have made peace between you and God. Peace be unto you. It is the declaration of what He had seen and heard of the Father as the result of His death. A benediction and a declaration.

Was it not also a fiat? By a fiat I mean that kind of word which God spoke to the darkness when He said, Light be, and light was. Here they were in trouble and Jesus said, Peace be, and before long peace was. It is always with Jesus to speak the Word of Power, for He is, Himself, the Word of Power. He is Gods Wordthe Word that built the heavens, the word that establishes the pillars of the universe, and when He speaks thus, it is not a mere wish, it is not a mere prayer, it is not a mere declaration, even, of a factit is the fulfillment of wish and prayer, and the application of the fact! Peace be unto you. Before long they did receive the peace which He thus authoritatively gave them.

But may I not view it in another light, namely, as an absolution? Think a minute, and you will see it is so. These were they who had forsaken Himthere was one who had denied Him! Out of them all, there was no faithful spirit there at all who proved to be faithful in the hour of danger. Like cowards, each one had cared for himself and deserted his Lord. They had slept while He agonized. They had retreated while He advanced. They had, every man, left their Master to seek each man his own. And now what does He say to them? Do they stand as culprits? Is He about to accuse them? Do they stand as deserters? Is He, as a captain, about to condemn them? No, that one word seems to say, It is forgotten. It is forgiven. My only word to you is, peace, peace, peace. I know your weaknesses. I know your deep regret. I know how you lament that you served Me thusregret no more, at least be not depressed with such regrets, for lo, My only return to you is this, I give you My, Salem, My salutation My word of goodwill, My sweet word of love. I have not revoked My legacy, though I might well have destroyed My last will and testament. I said, Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you. I confirm that will now, risen from the dead. You shall see I have not cut you off from My affectionate regard. I, risen from the dead, declare what I declared when your love was warm and your resolution was rather to die with me than to desert me. I give you the same as I gave you then, Peace be unto you.

Now I think there are some sweet things rolled up in those brief thoughts which I have given you. The text itself has richness in it. Now, my Brothers and Sisters, the second thing, and briefly, is

II. WHEN DID JESUS STAND IN THE MIDST OF HIS DISCIPLES, and say thus, Peace be unto you? When? Perhaps in considering the time, we may get some comfort and be led to hope that He will say the same tonight. Well, when did He come? Well, first, He came when they were quite unworthy of His coming. We have already told you how they had served Him. Cowardlythey had deserted Him! But though there was no one there that could have even thought, much less said, I deserve the Masters company, yet He came. Oh, I think we are, many of us, in the same plight. Looking back upon the past, we cannot feel that we deserve any love visits from the Savior. We dare not put up a plea on that ground. We are very unworthywe are very unworthybut that is no reason why He should not come. They were unworthy, but He stood in their midst and said, Peace.

Now note, next, that they were very unprepared. They were not looking for Him! They had not come together that night with any expectation of seeing HimI am sure they were not, for when He did come, they were afraid and thought they saw a spirit! They were least of all expecting Him to come. Well, and my Sister, you came in here unprepared. Do not excuse yourself, but yet do not despair about seeing your Lord! Brother, you came here perturbed, troubled. Your soul is not like the lake when it is still, which, like a molten mirror, reflects the stars above. But Jesus Christ can come and mirror Himself in your heart, first smoothing it with the word of peace. Yes, yes, it is wrong to be unprepared for Christs manifestation, but it is a thousand blessings that our unpreparedness does not keep Him away! I may expect to see Him, though unfit and unworthy. Come Savior, come, I beseech You, pass not by me. I might have feared You would if I had not seen that, in the case of the eleven, their unpreparedness did not bar the door. Oh, let not my unpreparedness keep You away!

Note, further, that our Lord came to them when they greatly needed Him. They had got into a disorganized, demoralized state as a group and they were, every one of them, almost ready to give up their faith. The third day had passed, and they had not yet believed in His Resurrection, though it had been witnessed to them. They were foolish and slow of heart, and I do not know what they might have done the next day, for he that is slow of heart and unbelieving today may go to something worse, if worse may be, tomorrow! And they needed Himthey needed Him and there He was in the midst of them! Courage, then, my Brother! You need Himyou may expect Him! Sister, you need Himoh, how much! How much do I need Himhow would a visit from His love kill many of my sins and quicken all my Graces! The physician comes not only when he is sent for, but when he knows he is needed. The Good Physician does so especially! It is not so much our sense of need as our need, itself, that often brings Him. We frequently do not know our need until He comes, and we see our need in contrast with the supply. Well, then, unworthy and unprepared, yet needing Him, we may expect Him! He will come if we cry out for Him. In our very midst He will stand tonight and reveal Himself!

Moreover, it was a time when they were exercising what spiritual light they hadlet that be remembered. They were in a low state, but they had met together. They had loved together. They were showing that like a flock of frightened sheep, they were running together, hardly knowing what else to do. They did at last get near one another. There is something that Christ loves in that. That was goodthere was something hopeful there. Well, we, at least, have got together in the same way. I know you said, Well, I dont know that I can do much in praising Christ, but I will go where His people are. Perhaps if I cannot praise, I shall still get a blessing, for all that. I know you often do so on the Sabbath. You say on the Saturday, I am glad it is the last day of the week, that I may go where my Brothers and Sisters are, and while I come, to get a blessing. I especially feel when I come to Prayer Meeting:

*There my best friends, my kinsmen, dwell.*

*There God, my Savior, reigns.*   
Well, the Lord Jesus loves to come where we love to be in His name! That helps to bring Him. So I have another good hope, that as we have come together, come together with no other end but that of stirring up what life we have, and of pouring out before Him what Grace He has given, and of seeking more, that we may expect to see Him!

More than thaton that occasion when He came, there were some of them who were testifying of what they knew. Two of them were telling how they saw Him in the breaking of bread at Emmaus. And while the two spoke, Jesus came! Now here stands one Witness who can bear testimony that there is a living Savior, and a real one, and that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit! And as you hear that testimony, and many of you are recording in your souls your, Amen, to it, I hope He will stand in our midst and again say in spiritual language, Peace be unto you.

Once more, though, I say they were in a low state they were all lamenting their Masters absence. I do not think, of all that company, there was one but what had a heavy heart and was sad because Jesus was not there. If you had turned to Peter and said, Peter, would you like to see Him? He would have said, Oh, for another look on those dear eyes, even though it broke my heart again. And John would have said, Oh, for another leaning of my head upon that bosom, if I might be permitted such a favor. And everyone, by dear remembrances of the past, would have said, Alas, we have lost everything in losing Him! Take away the sun out of the skies, rather than take Christ out of the circle of our fellowship. Now, dear Friends, have you, you lovers of the Saviorhave you missed Him and are you now saying, Oh, that I knew where I might find Him? Well, our mingled notes shall reach Him and He will come and stand tonight in the midst of us, and we, again, shall rejoicingly honor and worship while the King sits at His Table with His people. But time flies, and, therefore, I give you but the bare outline of the rest of my sermon.

III. WHAT CAME OF IT?   
What came of His appearance and of His speaking of peace? If you will look at the Chapter when you are at home, you will see that, first of all, when Jesus came He banished all their doubtsHe said to them, Why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Now, if He comes here tonight, in the midst of this assembly, that is just what He will say to you troubled ones. He will say, Why are you troubled? You, perhaps, might answer, Perhaps there is cause enough for it, but He will reply to it, All things work together for your good. When you pass through the river, I will be with you; the floods shall not overflow you. Cast your care upon Me. Why are you troubled? And He would then ask you the very question, Why do those thoughts arise in your hearts? You would have to guiltily, perhaps, confess what those thoughts were. You thought He was too hard! You thought He had forgotten you! You thought He was not true, after allthat He did not love you. You thought He would fail you. I will not tell you all your thoughts, but they have been evil thoughtsand if He is here tonight, the blush will mantle on your cheeks while you will say, I will never have such thoughts, again, but I will from now on say, Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him. There is one cure for evil thoughts like thisthe vanished Savior manifested to the eyes of faith!   
Then our Lord next proceeded to reveal Himself. Being presentwhich He might have been, you know, and yet they might not have known HimHe now went to reveal Himself and make them see Him. This is what He did. 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. Then He proves His kinship with earth, His real Manhood, for He took a piece of broiled fish and of a honeycomb, and did eat before them all. Now even so will He do tonight. If He were here tonight, it were no use to you if these scales were upon your eyesHe will take them off! Those harder scales on an earthbound heart, He will take them off. Oh, I have been amazed, my Brothers and Sisters, I bear witness I have sometimes been amazed when the Lord has taken away the stone out of my heart, to feel my own sudden tenderness! I have even sat at that Table, sometimes, and dealt out the bread and wine to you, and longed to be but a dog beneath the table, to eat but a crumb that fell from itand all of a sudden I have felt His nearness and rejoiced with unspeakable joy! And oftentimes in preaching, when my spirit has felt like a frozen brook, His Grace has thawed my heart! Is not this what the Spouse meant when she said, Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib? Now it is the Presence of Christ that quickens us. Let the prayer be put by each one, Quicken You me, O Lord, according to Your Word. Yourself, the Word, draw near to me and I shall be quick to perceive You, to embrace You, to rejoice in You this night.   
Then the next act of our Savior was to proceed to inform their understanding. You observe He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. Nearness to Christ is an education. Get near to Jesus and you will find that the Corpus Christi is the true college! He who knows the body of Christ has got the body of theology, the body of divinitythe true theology of the Word of God. He that knows Him has understanding. With all your getting, get understanding! And from Him you shall get it, for He is Wisdom. And is He not the Truth of God? And is He not the Incarnate Wisdom? With Him God took counsel before the earth was. There is no studying the Scriptures that becomes so useful as when we study them with Christ to turn over the leaves for us.   
Then the next thing was He refreshed their memories. Perhaps I ought to have mentioned this before because it occurs first. He said to them, These are the words I spoke to you. Tonight, perhaps, if Jesus is here, you will remember those other times when you have seen Him *His former visits we recount,   
When with Him on the holy mount.*   
Yes, you will say as Jesus is here, I do remember You and the love of Your espousals. I do remember other sweet seasons when I was with Your people, and my heart glowed at Your love. You will look back, some of you gray-headed Brothers and Sisters in Christyou will look back, perhaps, 50 years, and remember when Jesus first looked in at your soul. Dear memories! Perish all else but the relics of Christ, the traditions of His Presence in my spiritthese will I hand down from year to year and record them forevermore! Nothing like this to set the memory right, the immediate, actual Presence of Christ, even at this moment.   
And then, Beloved, in addition to all this, the Saviors thus appearing showed them their true position, for He told them that they were His witness of these things. When they saw Him, they felt they were something more than mere lookers on, they were to be tellers and testifiers to others. I hope we shall feel this, tonight, that we shall go out from our seats and from the Communion Table, saying, I have seen the Lord, and I will be a witness in my own familyI will be His witness in the court, or the street, or the city where I dwell. I have seen Him and shall I close my mouth concerning Him? No! His Presence has opened my mouth, that I may show forth His praise. I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of His righteousness, even of His only.   
And last of all, that blessed presence created intense joy, though there was a wonderment about the joy that mingled it with unbelief, and we read, While they yet believed not for joy. They were very, very glad. If you had seen them go into that house, and seen them come out, you would not have known they were the same men! Yet they were no richer, no healthier, no more favored,

but they had seen the Lord, and they were glad! It is especially recorded by John, Then were the disciples glad when they had seen the Lord. Oh, there will be singing here! There will be music in your hearts! You will trip home with merry feet if Jesus Christ does come! Come, then, dear Master! You have bled for us. You have loved us with an everlasting lovetis but a little thing comparatively that we ask! Your relationship to us binds You to grant it! You will not be a stranger to Your own flesh! You will not hide Yourself from those who are members of Your body, of Your flesh and of Your bones! Your delights were with the sons of men and You have not changed. Oh, if ever You did reveal Yourself, reveal Yourself to us tonight! Melt us down under the Glory of Your Presence! Dissolve us with the superlative majesty of Your love and we will worship and bless You forever and ever!   
Now I have said nothing to those of you who know Him not, but I will say these words and have done. His worth   
*His worth if all the nations knew,   
Surely all the world would love Him too.*   
God bless you. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 32; JOHN 17.**

*PSALM 32*   
A Psalm of David, Maschilthat is to say, an instructive Psalm Maschil. I suppose that David wrote it after he had been forgiven and restored to Divine favor. I think we may read it as a part of our own experience, either of conversion or when restored after backsliding.

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

3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. A wanton glance and the sin with Bathsheba. Where was the pleasure of it when it cost him all this? Such groaning that his very bones grew old, as if they were rotten, and his heart was heavy as if he wished to die. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. God was dealing with him! God with His hand pressing him heavily, forcing his sin home upon him, making him say, My sin is always before me. Oh, the misery of sinning to a child of God! Do not dream that we can ever have any pleasure in sin! The worldling may, but the Believer never can. To him it is a deadly viper that will fill his veins with burning poison.

4. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. When he tried to pray, it was a dried-up prayer. He tried to make a Psalm, but it was a dried-up song. He tried to do some good, for he was still a good man, but it was all withered without the Spirit of God. His moisture was gone out of him, turned into the drought of summer, and summer, in Davids country, was a very droughty thing, indeed. Every human thing despaired, the grass seemed to turn to dustit was so with him. If you go into sin, this is what will happen to you. If you are a true child of God, you will have all the joy of God taken from you, all the moisture of your heart dried upand you will be like a parched, withered thing. Selahtime to stop, time to have a pause in the musiche was on so bass a key, he now had need to tighten the harp strings and rise to something a little sweeter.

5. I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD: and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. He must come to confessionfull, spontaneous, unreservedthere must be a resolution. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lorda firm determination to hide nothing, to see the sin, yourself, and to tell the Lord that you see it, and to confess it with great grief and sorrow. What a wonderful word that is, I said, I will confess, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. God took away the sin! Yes, the very pith and marrow of it, the iniquity of my sin. Take the bone away and the marrow of the bone, too! You forgave the iniquity of my sinit has all gone, wholly goneby one stroke of Gods Divine Grace the sinner was pardoned! Selah again

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

7. You are my hiding place: You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. You are my hiding placeprecious words! You are my hiding placenot, You are a hiding place, but, You are MY hiding place. A man who is beset by foes does not stand still and say, Yes, I can see there is a hiding place there, but he runs to it! Beloved, run to your hiding place this morning, each one of you who can have a claim and interest in Christ! Run to Him and say, You shall preserve me from trouble. David has come up out of the roaring to the Singing. All day long he roared, and now all day long he sings! He hears songs everywhere! He lives in a circle of music, his heart is so glad! Well may he put another, Selah, for he has struck the strings very joyfully and they need tuning again.

8. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go: I will guide you with My eye. And here the speaker changesI will instruct you. I have forgiven you. I will instruct you, and teach you in the way which you shall go. I have restored you back to the way. Now I will teach you in the way you shall go. I will guide you with My eye. Your own might lead you astray. I will guide you with My eye. I will be on the path, I will fix My eye upon you. I will guide you with My eye.

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

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

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

**JOHN 17.**   
Verses 1, 2. These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You. As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. Here we have the two Doctrines of a General and a Particular Redemption. Through His death, Christ has power given Him over all flesh, but the distinct, special objective is the salvation of His ownthat He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

3. And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. To know God in the sense of being acquainted with Himloving Himabiding in fellowship with Him this is life eternal! To know God in Christ Jesus is to be saved, indeed!

4. I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. Which no other man could ever have saidnot even Adam in his perfection, for his work was not finishedand, alas, how marred it was before it came near to finishing! And the most gracious man that ever died could not, in his last moments, say, I have finished the work which You gave me to do, for it was still imperfect. There were many things which he would wish to have done, and many errors which he would wish to have rectified. But our Lord is more than man, and rises to this pointI have finished the work which You gave Me to do.

5. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have disrobed Myself to be Your Servant. Clothe Me again with the garments of My majesty. Let me come back to the palace when I shall have passed through the stream of death. So far is the prayer for Himself. Now He prays for His people.

6, 7. I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave Me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your Word. Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. They have not accepted Me as a human teacher on My own account, unsent and uncommissioned, but they perfectly understand that there is a union between the Father and the Son. The things that You have given Me are of You.

8. For I have given unto them the Words which You gave Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me. There are great depths in these words. One of the greatest of German divines always refused to preach from this chapter, for he said he felt that few of Gods people had a sufficient measure of faith to understand it. And when he came to die, he had this read to him three times before he fell asleep. There is a world of wonderful mystery! Though the words are short and plain, yet the sense is fathomless.

9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours. There is an intercession of Christ which is for all the world, but His choicest intercessionHis effectual prayeris for His own. Nothing, perhaps, makes men so angry as this statement! They cannot endure that God should dispense His gifts according to His own willbut so it stands true!. There is an intercession in which none have a part but His own. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me, for they are Yours.

10, 11. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. They, therefore, will be left. The Shepherd will be gone. They will seem to be like orphans with their best Friend departed.

11-13. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to You; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. He asks not only that they may be kept and so unharmed, but that they may be comforted, and so made glad. O sad hearts, hear your Redeemers prayer for youand do not doubt that it is answeredthat they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

14. I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. If nobody hates you for being a Christian, are you a Christian? If you find that you run with the general herd, and swim with the current, can you be a follower of that Christ who was despised and rejected of men?

15. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One. Not that they should shut themselves up in monasteries and convents. That is not the prayer of Christ. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One.

16-19. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your Truth: Your Word is Truth. As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth. Sanctify Myselfconsecrate Myselfset Myself apartfor their salvation that they also might be sanctified, consecrated, set apart through the Truth of God. Now comes a third part of the prayer, in which He pleads for the whole Churchfor that part of it at that time not savedfor the unborn onesfor us.

20-21. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word. That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. Our Savior knew how apt we would be to split up into sects, and to be divided into parties, and so He prays again and again that we may be one! Cultivate the spirit of Christian affection. If there are divisions, let them not come through you. Contend earnestly for the faith, but also let us love one another.

22, 23. And the glory which You gave Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me. Surely the passage seems to culminate here. These words rise like the peak of a mighty Alp almost out of our sight into the clear brightness of Heavenhave loved them as You have loved Me. Now, Believer, you cannot fully comprehend this, but believe itthat as surely as the Father loves the Son, as and after the same manner He also loves youwithout beginning, without measure, without change, without end! You have loved them as You have loved Me.

24-26. 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. O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it: that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them. Let us read that wonderful passage againthat the love with which You have loved Me may be in them.

26. And I in them. Sacred, mystical union! May our souls enjoy it day by day!   
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 #1958 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN LORD TO THE ELEVEN   
NO. 1958

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 10, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And as they thus spoke, Jesus, Himself, stood in the midst of them and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in**

**your hearts? 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. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have you any food here? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Luke 24:36-44.**

THIS, beloved Friends, is one of the most memorable of our Lords many visits to His disciples after He had risen from the dead. Each one of these appearances had its own peculiarity. I cannot, at this time, give you even an outline of the special colorings which distinguished each of the many manifestations of our risen Lord. The instance now before us may be considered to be the fullest and most deliberate of all the manifestations, abounding beyond every other in infallible proofs. Remember that it occurred on the same day in which our Lord had risen from the dead and it was the close of a long day of gracious appearings. It was the summing up of a series of interviews, all of which were proofs of the Lords Resurrection. There was the empty tomb and the grave clothes left there the place where the Lord lay was accessible to all who chose to inspect itfor the great stone which had been sealed and guarded was rolled away. This, in itself, was most impressive evidence. Moreover, the holy women had been there and had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive. Magdalene had enjoyed a special interview. Peter and John had been into the empty tomb and had seen for themselves. The report was current that the Lord was risen, indeed, and had appeared unto Simon. It was a special thing that He should appear unto Simon for the disciples painfully knew how Simon had denied his Master and His appearance unto Simon seemed to have struck them as peculiarly characteristicit was so like the manner of our Lord.

They met together in their bewildermentthe 11 of them gathered, as I suppose, for a social meal, for Mark tells as that the Lord appeared unto them as they sat at meat. It must have been very late in the day, but they were loath to part and so kept together till midnight. While they were sitting at meat, two Brothers came in who, even after the sun had set, had hastened back from Emmaus. These newcomers related how One who seemed a stranger had joined Himself to them as they were walking from Jerusalem, had talked with them in such a way that their hearts had been made to burn and had made Himself known unto them in the breaking of bread at the journeys end. They declared that it was the Lord who had thus appeared to them and, though they had intended to spend the night at Emmaus, they had hurried back to tell the marvelous news to the eleven! Hence the witnesses accumulated with great rapidityit became more and more clear that Jesus had really risen from the dead! But as yet the doubters were not convinced, for Mark says, After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

Everything was working up to one pointthe most unbelieving of them were being driven into a corner! They must doubt the truthfulness of Magdalene and the other saintly women. They must question the veracity of Simon. They must reject the two newly-arrived Brothers and charge them with telling idle talesor else they must believe that Jesus was still alive, though they had seen Him die upon the Cross! At that moment the chief confirmation of all presented itselffor Jesus, Himself, stood in the midst of them. The doors were shut, but, despite every obstacle, their Lord was present in the center of the assembly! In the Presence of One whose loving smile warmed their hearts, their unbelief was destined to thaw and disappear! Jesus revealed Himself in all the warmth of His vitality and loveand made them understand that it was none other than Himself and that the Scriptures had told them it should be so. They were slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets had spoken concerning Him, but He brought them to it by His familiar communion with them. Oh, that in a like way He would put an end to all our doubts and fears!

Brothers and Sisters, though you and I were not at that interview, yet we may derive much profit from it while we look at it in detail, anxiously desiring that we may in spirit see, look upon and handle the Word of Life manifested in the flesh! Oh, to learn all that Jesus would teach us as we now, in spirit, take our places at that midnight meeting of the chosen ones!

In this wonderful manifestation of our Lord to His Apostles, I notice three things worthy of our careful observation this morning. This incident teaches us the certainty of the Resurrection of our Lord. Secondly, it shows us a little of the Character of our risen Master. And, thirdly, it gives us certain hints as to the nature of our own resurrection, when it shall be granted us. Oh, that we may be counted worthy to attain to the resurrection from among the dead!

I. First, then, let us see here THE CERTAINTY OF OUR LORDS RESURRECTION. We have often asserted and we affirm it yet again, that no fact in history is better attested than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! The common mass of facts accepted by all men as historical are not one-tenth as certainly assured to us as this fact is! It must not be denied by any who are willing to pay the slightest respect to the testimony of their fellow men, that Jesus, who died upon the Cross and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, did literally rise again from the dead!

Observe, that when this Person appeared in the room, the first token that it was Jesus was His speechthey were to have the evidence of hearingHe used the same speech. No sooner did He appear than He spoke. He was never dumb and it was natural that the great Teacher and Friend should at once salute His followers, from whom He had been so painfully parted. His first words must have called to their minds those cheering notes with which He had closed His last address. They must have recognized that charming voice. I suppose its tone and rhythm to have been rich with a music most sweet and heavenly. A perfect voice would naturally be given to a perfect Man. The very sound of it would, through their ears, have charmed conviction into their minds with a glow of joy had they not been frozen up in unbelief. Never man spoke like this Man.

They might have known Him by His speech, alone. There were tones of voice as well as forms of language which were peculiar to Jesus of Nazareth. What our Lord said was just like Heit was all of a piece with His former discourse. Among the last sounds which lingered in their ears was that word, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto youand now it must surely be the same Person who introduces Himself with the cheering salutation, Peace be unto you. About the Lord there were the air and style of one who had peace, Himself, and loved to communicate it to others. The tone in which He spoke peace tended to create it! He was a peacemaker and a peace giverand by this sign they were driven to discern their Leader.

Do you not think that they were almost persuaded to believe that it was Jesus when He proceeded to chide them in a manner more tender than any other chiding could have been? How gentle the words when He said, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Our Lords chidings were comforts in disguise! His upbraiding was consolation in an unusual shape. Did not His upbraiding on this occasion bring to their minds His question upon the sea of Galilee when He said to them, Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Did they not also remember when He came to them walking on the water and they were afraid that He was a spirit and cried out for fearand He said to them, It is I. Be not afraid? Surely they remembered enough of these things to have made sure that it was their Lord had not their spirits been sunken in sorrow! Our Lord had never been unwisely silent as to their faults. He had never passed over their errors with that false and indulgent affection which gratifies its own ease by tolerating sin. No, He had pointed out their faults with the fidelity of true love. And now that He thus admonished them, they ought to have perceived that it was none other than He. Alas, unbelief is slow to die!

When Jesus came at last to talk to them about Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, He was upon a favorite topic. Then the 11 might have nudged each other and whispered, It is the Lord! Jesus had, in His latter hours, been continually pointing out the Scriptures which were being fulfilled in Himself and, at this interview, He repeated His former teaching. This is assuredly none other than He who always spoke His Fathers mind and willand constantly did honor to the Holy Spirit by whom the sacred Books were inspired! Thus in His tones and topics our Lord gave clear indications that it was He who had suddenly appeared in that little assembly.

I want you to notice that this evidence was all the better because they, themselves, evidently remained the same men as they had been. They were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And thus they did exactly what they had done long before when He came to them walking on the waters! In the interval between His death and His appearing, no change had come over them! Nothing had happened to them to elevate them, as yet, out of their littleness of mind. The Holy Spirit was not yet given and, therefore, all that they had heard at the Last Supper and seen in Gethsemane and at the Cross had not yet exercised its full influence upon them. They were still childish and unbelieving! The same men, then, are looking at the same Person and they are in their ordinary conditionthis argues strongly for the correctness of their identification of their well-beloved Lord. They are not carried away by enthusiasm, nor wafted aloft by fanaticismthey are not even, as yet, borne up by the Holy Spirit into an unusual state of mindthey are as slow of heart and as fearful as ever they were. If they are convinced that Jesus has risen from the dead, depend upon it, it must be so! If they go forth to tell the tidings of His Resurrection and to yield up their lives for it, you may be sure that their witness is true, for they are not the sort of men to be deceived!

In our day there has been a buzz about certain miracles of faith, but the statements usually come from persons whose impartiality is questionablecredulous persons who saw what they evidently wished to see. I know several good people who would not willfully deceive who, nevertheless, upon some points are exceedingly unreliable because their enthusiasm is prepared to be imposed upon. Any hawker of wonders would expect them to be buyersthey have a taste for the marvelous! As witnesses, the evidence of such people has no value in it as compared with that of these 11 men who evidently were the reverse of credulous or excitable. In the Apostles case, the facts were tested to the utmost and the truth was not admitted till it was forced upon them! I am not excusing the unbelief of the disciples, but I claim that their witness has all the more weight in it because it was the result of such cool investigation. These Apostles were, in a special manner, to be witnesses of the Resurrection and it makes assurance doubly sure to us when we see them arrive at their conclusion with such deliberate steps. These were men like ourselves, only perhaps a little less likely to be deceivedthey needed to be convinced by overwhelming witness and they were so! And afterwards they always declared boldly that their crucified Lord had, indeed, risen from the dead!

Thus far in the narrative they had received the evidence of their ears and that is by no means weak evidence. But now they are to have the evidence of sight, for the Savior said to them, Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. John says, His side, also, which he especially noted because he had seen the piercing of that side and the blood and water flow out. They were to see and identify that blessed body which had suffered death! The nail prints were visible, both in His hands which were open before them, and also in His feet which their condescending Lord deigned to expose to their deliberate gaze. There was the mark of the gash in His sideand this the Lord Jesus graciously bared to them, as afterwards He did more fully to Thomas, when He said, Reach here your hand and thrust it into My side. These were the marks of the Lord Jesus by which His identity could be verified.

Beyond this, there was the general contour of His Countenance and the fashion of the whole Man by which they could discern Him. His body, though it was now, in a sense, glorified, was so far veiled as to its new condition that it retained its former likeness. They must have perceived that the Lord was no longer subject to the pains and infirmities of our ordinary mortalityotherwise His wounds had not been healed so soon but there remained sure marks by which they knew that it was Jesus and no other. He looked like a lamb that had been slainthe signs of the Son of Man were in His hands and feet and side. Their sight of the Lord was not a hasty glimpse, but a steady inspection, for John, in his first Epistle writes, Which we have seen and looked upon. This implies a lengthened looking and such the Lord Jesus invited His friends to take. They could not have been mistaken when they were afforded such a view of those marks by which His identity was established. The same Christ that died, had risen from the dead! The same Jesus that had hung upon the Cross, now stood in the midst of those who knew Him best! It was the same body and they identified italthough a great change had doubtless come over it since it was taken down from the tree.

Furthermore, that they might be quite sure, the Lord invited them to receive the evidence of touch or feeling. He called them to a form of examination from which, I doubt not, many of them shrank. He said, Handle Me. Handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. Writers have remarked upon the use of the word, bones, instead of, blood, in this case. But I do not think that any inference can be safely drawn from there. It would have been barely possible for the disciples to have discovered, by handling, that the Lord had blood, but they could, by handling, perceive that He had bones and, therefore, the expression is natural enough, without our imputing to it a meaning which it may never have been intended to convey! The Savior had a reason, no doubt, other than some have imagined, for the use of the terms, a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have. The Savior had not assumed a phantom bodythere were bones in it as well as fleshit was, to the fullest, as substantial as ever. He had not put on an appearance, as angels do when they visit the sons of men. No, His body was solid substance which could be handled. Handle Me and see that it is I. He bade them see that it was flesh and bone, such as no spirit has. There were the substantial elements of a human frame in that body of Christ which stood in the midst of the eleven. Jesus cried, Handle Me and see.

Thus our Lord was establishing to the Apostles, not only His identity, but also His substantial corporeal existenceHe would make them see that He was a Man of flesh and bonesnot a ghost, airy and unsubstantial. This should correct a certain form of teaching upon the Resurrection which is all too common. I was present some years ago at the funeral of a man of God for whom I had much respect. In the chapel a certain excellent Doctor of Divinity gave us an address, before the interment, in which he informed us as to the condition of his departed friend. He said that he was not in the coffinindeed, there was nothing of him there. This I was sorry to hear, for if so, I was ignorantly mourning over a body which had no relation to my friend. The preacher went on to describe the way in which the man of God had ascended to Heaven at the moment of death his spirit fashioning for itself a body as it passed through the air!

I believed in my friends being in Heaven, but not in his being there in a body. I knew that my friends body was in the coffin and I believed that it would be laid in the tomband I expected that it would rise again from the grave at the coming of the Lord. I did not believe that my friend would weave for himself a filmy frame, making a second body, nor do I believe it now, though I heard it so affirmed. I believe in the resurrection of the dead! I look to see the very body which was buried, raised again! It is true that as the seed develops into the flower, so the buried body is merely the germ out of which will come the spiritual bodybut, still, it will not be a second body, but the same body, as to identity. I shall enter into no dispute about the atoms of the body, nor deny that the particles of our flesh, in the process of their decay, may be taken up by plants and absorbed into the bodies of animals and all that! I do not care one jot about identity of atoms! There may not be a solitary ounce of the same matter, but yet identity can be preservedand it must be preserved if I read my Bible right!

My body today is the same as that which I inhabited 20 years ago and yet all its particles are different! Even so, the body put into the grave and the body that rises from it are not two bodies, but one body. The saints are not, at the coming of their Lord, to remain disembodied spirits, nor to wear freshly created bodies, but their entire manhood is to be restored and to enjoy endless bliss! Well said the Patriarch of old, in my flesh shall I see God. He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us, also, by Jesus. I cannot see how the doctrine of Christ goes beyond the doctrine of Plato and others if it is not a doctrine which respects this body! The immortality of the soul was accepted and known as a Truth of God before the faith of Christ was preached, for it is dimly discoverable by the light of nature. But the resurrection of the body is a Revelation peculiar to the Christian dispensationat which the wise men of the world very naturally mockedbut which it ill becomes Christian men to spirit away!

The body which is buried shall rise again! It is true it is sown a natural body and shall be raised a spiritual body, but it will be truly a body and the same it which was sown shall be raised! It is true it is sown in weakness and raised in power, but the same it is thus raised. It is true that it is sown in weakness to be raised in power and sown a corruptible body, to be raised in incorruption, but in each case it is the same body, though so gloriously changed.

It will be of a material substance, also, for our Saviors body was material, since He said, Handle Me and see that it is I, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. Still further to confirm the faith of the disciples and to show them that their Lord had a real bodyand not the mere form of oneHe gave them evidence which appealed to their common sense. He said Have you any food here? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. This was an exceedingly convincing proof of His unquestionable Resurrection! In very deed and fact, and not in vision and phantom, the Man who had died upon the Cross stood among them!

Let us just think of this and rejoice! This Resurrection of our Lord Jesus is a matter of certainty, for, if you spirit this away, you have done away with the Gospel altogether! If He is not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain! You are yet in your sins! Justification receives its seal in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the deadnot in His appearing as a phantom, but in His being loosed from death and raised to a glorious life! This is Gods mark of the acceptance of the work of the great Substitute and of the justification of all for whom His atoning work was performed.

Note well that this is also our grand hope concerning those who are asleep. You have buried them forever if Christ was not raised from the dead! They have passed out of your sight and they shall never again have fellowship with you unless Jesus rose again from the dead! The Apostle makes the resurrection of all who are in Christ to hinge upon the Resurrection of Christ. I do not feel it necessary, when I talk with the bereaved, to comfort them at all concerning those that are asleep in Christ, as to their soulswe know that they are forever with the Lord and are supremely blessed and, therefore, we need no further comfort. The only matter upon which we need consolation is that poor body which once we loved so well, but which now we must leave in the cold clay. The resurrection comes in as a final undoing of all that death has done. They shall come again from the land of the enemy. Jesus says, Your dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. If we question the Resurrection of Christ, then is the whole of our faith questioned and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished! And we are left just where others were before Christ brought this Divine Truth of God to light. Only as we are sure of the Resurrection of Jesus can we cry, O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?

II. Secondly, will you follow me while I very briefly set forth OUR LORDS CHARACTER WHEN RISEN FROM THE DEAD?   
What is He, now that He has conquered death and all that belongs to it? What is He, now that He shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore? He is much the same as He used to be! Indeed, He is altogether what He was, for He is the same yesterday, today and forever.   
Notice, first, that in this appearance of Christ we are taught that He is still anxious to create peace in the hearts of His people. No sooner did He make Himself visible than He said, Peace be unto you. Beloved, your risen Lord wants you to be happy! When He was here on earth, He said, Let not your hearts be troubled. He says the same to you today. He takes no delight in the distresses of His people. He would have His joy to be in them, that their joy may be full. He bids you rejoice in Him always. He whispers to you, this morning, as you sit in the pew, Peace be unto you. He has not lost His tender care over the least of the flockHe would have each one led by the still waters and made to lie down in green pastures.   
Note, again, that He has not lost His habit of chiding unbelief and encouraging faith, for as soon as He has risen and speaks with His disciples, He asks them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? He loves you to believe in Him and be at rest. Find if you can, Beloved, one occasion in which Jesus inculcated doubt, or bade men dwell in uncertainty! The apostles of unbelief are everywhere, today, and they imagine that they are doing God a service by spreading what they call, honest doubt. This is death to all joy! Poison to all peace! The Savior did not do so! He would have them take extraordinary measures to get rid of their doubt. Handle Me, He says. It was going a long way to say that, but He would sooner be handled than His people should doubt! Ordinarily it might not be proper for them to touch Him. Had He not said to the women, Touch Me not? But what may not be allowable, ordinarily, becomes proper when necessity demands it. The removal of their doubt as to our Lords Resurrection necessitated that they should handle Him and, therefore, He bids them do so.   
O Beloved, you that are troubled and vexed with thoughts and, therefore, get no comfort out of your religion because of your mistrustyour Lord would have you come very near to Himand put His Gospel to any test which will satisfy you. He cannot bear you to doubt! He appeals tenderly, saying, O you of little faith, why do you doubt? He would at this moment still encourage you to taste and see that the Lord is good. He would have you believe in the substantial reality of His religion and handle Him and see! Trust Him largely and simply, as a child trusts its mother and knows no fear!

Notice, next, that when the Savior had risen from the dead and a measure of His Glory was upon Him, He was still most condescendingly familiar with His people. He showed them His hands and His feet and He said, Handle Me and see. When He was on earth, before His passion, He was most free with His disciplesno pretense of dignity kept Him apart from them. He was their Master and Lordand yet He washed their feet! He was the Son of the Highest, but He was among them as One who serves! He said, Suffer little children to come unto Me. He is the same today

*His sacred name a common word On earth He loves to hear;   
There is no majesty in Him*

*Which love may not come near.*   
Though He reigns in the highest heavens, His delights are still with the sons of men! He will still permit us to sit at His feet, or even to lean our head upon His bosom. Jesus will listen as we pour out our griefs. He will regard our cry when we are not pleading about a sword in our bones, but only concerning a thorn in our flesh. Jesus is still the Brother born for adversity. He still manifests Himself to us as He does not unto the world. Is not this clear and also very pleasant to see, as we study this interview?

The next thing is that the risen Lord was still wonderfully patient, even as He had always been. He bore with their folly and infirmity, for, while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He did not chide them. He discerned between one unbelief and another and He judged that the unbelief which grew out of wonder was not so blamable as that former unbelief which denied credible evidence. Instead of rebuke, He gives confirmation. He says, Have you any food here? And He takes a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb and eats it. Not that He needed food. His body could receive food, but it did not require it. Eating was His own sweet way of showing them that if He could, He would solve all their questions. He would do anything in His great patience that they might be cured of their mistrust! Just so today, Beloved, Jesus does not chide you, but He invites you to believe Him. He invites you, therefore, to sup with Him and eat bread at His table. He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever, but in His great mercy He will use another tone and encourage you to trust Him. Can you hold back? Oh, please, do not do so!

Observe that our Savior, though He was risen from the dead and, therefore, in a measure, in His Glory, entered into the fullest fellowship with His own. Peter tells us that they did eat and drink with Him. I do not notice, in this narrative, that He drank with them, but He certainly ate of such food as they had, and this was a clear token of His fellowship with them. In all ages eating and drinking with one another has been the most expressive token of communion and so the Savior seems to say to us, today, I have eaten with you, My people, since I have quit the grave. I have eaten with you through the 11 who represented you. I have eaten and I will still eat with you, till we sit down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If any man opens unto Me, I will come into Him and will sup with Him and he with Me. Yes, the Lord Jesus is still wonderfully near to us and He waits to grant us the highest forms of fellowship which can be known this side the gate of pearl! In this let our spirits quietly rejoice.

Let me call your attention to the fact that when Jesus had risen from the dead, He was just as tender of Scripture as He was before His decease. I have dwelt for two Sunday mornings [Sermons #1955Jesus Declining the Legions and #1956On the Cross After Death] upon the wonderful way in which our Lord always magnified the Scriptures. And here, as if to crown all, He told them that, all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead. Find Jesus where you may, He is the antagonist of those who would lessen the authority of Holy Scripture!

It is written is His weapon against Satan, His argument against wicked men! The learned at this hour scoff at the Book and accuse of Bibliolatry those of us who reverence the Divine Word! But in this they derive no assistance from the teaching or example of Jesus. Not a word derogatory of Scripture ever fell from the lips of Jesus ChristHe always manifested the most reverent regard for every jot and tittle of the Inspired Volume. Since our Savior, not only before His death, but after it, took care, thus, to commend the Scriptures to us, let us avoid with all our hearts all teaching in which Holy Scripture is put into the background! Still the Bible and the Bible, alone, should be and shall be the religion of Protestantsand we will not budge an inch from that standpoint, God helping us!

Once again, our Savior, after He had risen from the dead, showed that He was anxious for the salvation of men, for it was at this interview that He breathed upon the Apostles and bade them receive the Holy Spirit, to fit them to go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature! The missionary spirit is the spirit of Christnot only the spirit of Him that died to save, but the spirit of Him who has finished His work and has gone to His rest. Let us cultivate that spirit, if we would be like the Jesus who has risen from the dead!

III. I can stay no longer, because I would draw your attention, in the third place, to the light which is thrown by this incident upon THE NATURE OF OUR OWN RESURRECTION.

First, I gather from this text that our nature, our whole humanity, will be perfected at the day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, when the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we that may then be alive shall be changed. Jesus has redeemed not only our souls, but our bodies! Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit? When the Lord shall deliver His captive people out of the land of the enemy, He will not leave a bone of one of them in the adversarys power. The dominion of death shall be utterly broken. Our entire nature shall be redeemed unto the living God in the day of our resurrection! After death, until that day, we shall be disembodied spirits, but in the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, we shall attain our full inheritance! We are looking forward to a complete restoration. At this time the body is dead because of sin and, therefore, it suffers pain and tends to decay, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. In our resurrection, however, the body shall also be quickened and the resurrection shall be to the body what regeneration has been to the soul! Thus shall our humanity be completely delivered from the consequences of the Fall. Perfect manhood is that which Jesus restores from sin and the graveand this shall be ours in the day of His appearing.

I gather next that in our resurrection our nature will be full of peace. Jesus Christ would not have said, Peace be unto you, if there had not been a deep peace within Himself. He was calm and undisturbed. There was much peace about His whole life, but after His Resurrection, His peace becomes very conspicuous. There is no striving with scribes and Pharisees; there is no battling with anybody after our Lord is risen! A French author has written of our Lords Forty Days on earth after the Resurrection under the title of, The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory. Though rather misleading at first, the title is not so inaccurate as it appears, for His work was done and His warfare was accomplishedand our Lords life here was the beginning of His Glory. Such shall be our lifewe shall be flooded with eternal peace and shall never again be tossed about with trouble, sorrow, distress or persecution! An infinite serenity shall keep our body, soul and spirit throughout eternity.

When we rise again our nature will find its home amid the communion of saints. When the Lord Jesus Christ had risen again, His first resort was the room where His disciples were gathered. His first evening was spent among the objects of His love. Even so, wherever we are, we shall seek and find communion with the saints. I joyfully expect to meet many of you in Heavento know you and commune with you. I would not like to float about in the future state without a personality in the midst of a company of undefined and unknown beings. That would be no Heaven to me! No, Brothers and Sisters, we shall soon perceive who our comrades are and we shall rejoice in them and in our Lord. There could be no communion among unknown entities. You cannot have fellowship with people whom you do not recognize and, therefore, it seems to me most clear that we shall, in the future state, have fellowship through recognitionand our heavenly resurrection bodies shall help the recognition and share in the fellowship. As the risen Christ wends His way to the upper room of the eleven, so will you, by force of holy gravitation, find your way to the place where all the servants of God shall gather at the last. Then shall we be truly at home and go no more out forever.

Furthermore, I see that in that day our bodies will admirably serve our spirits. For look at our Lords body. Now that He is risen from the dead, He desires to convince His disciples and His body becomes at once the means of His argument, the evidence of His statement! His flesh and bones were text and sermon for Him. Handle Me, He says, and see. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, whatever we may have to do in eternity, we shall not be hindered by our bodies as we now are! Flesh and blood hamper us, but flesh and bones shall help us! I need to speak, sometimes, but my head aches, or my throat is choked, or my legs refuse to bear me upbut it is not so in the resurrection from the dead! A thousand infirmities in this earthly life compass us about, but our risen body shall be helpful to our regenerated nature! It is only a natural body now, fit for our soul, but hereafter it shall be a

spiritual body, adapted to all the desires and wishes of the Heaven-born spiritand no longer shall we have to cry out, The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. We shall find in the risen body a power such as the spirit shall wish to employ for the noblest purposes. Will not this be wonderful?

In that day, Beloved, when we shall rise again from the dead, we shall remember the past. Do you not notice how the risen Savior says, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you. He had not forgotten His former state. I think Dr. Watts is right when he says that we shall, with transporting joys recount the labors of our feet. It is rather a small subject and probably we shall far more delight to dwell on the labors of our Redeemers hands and feetbut still, we shall remember all the ways whereby the Lord our God led usand we shall talk to one another concerning them. In Heaven we shall remember our happy Sabbaths here below, when our hearts burned within us while Jesus, Himself, drew near. Since Jesus speaks after He has risen of the things that He said while He was with His disciples, we perceive that the river of death is not like the fabled Lethe, which caused all who drank thereof to forget their past. We shall arise with a multitude of hallowed memories enriching our minds! Death will not be oblivion to us, for it was not so to Jesus. Rather shall we meditate on mercies experienced and, by discoursing on them, we shall make known to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God!

Observe that our Lord, after He had risen from the dead, was still full of the spirit of service and, therefore, He called others out to go and preach the Gospeland He gave them the Spirit of God to help them. When you and I are risen from the dead, we shall rise full of the spirit of service! What engagements we may have throughout eternity we are not told because we have enough to do to fulfill our engagements now, but assuredly we shall be honored with errands of mercy and tasks of love fitted for our heavenly being. and I doubt not it shall be one of our greatest delights, while seeing the Lords face, to serve Him with all our perfected powers! He will use us in the grand economy of future manifestations of His Divine Glory. Possibly we may be to other dispensations what the angels have been to this. Be that as it may, we shall find a part of our bliss and joy in constantly serving Him who has raised us from the dead!

There I leave the subject, wishing that I could have handled it much better. Think it over when you are quiet at home and add this thought to it, that you have a share in all that is contained in resurrection. May the Holy Spirit give you a personal grip of this vital Truth of God! You, yourself, shall rise from the deadtherefore, be not afraid to die!

If any of my Hearers have no share in our Lords Resurrection, I am truly sorry for them. O my Friend, what you are losing! If you have no share in the living Lord, may God have mercy upon you! If you have no share in Christs rising from the dead, then you will not be raised up in the likeness of His glorified body! If you do not attain to that resurrection from among the dead, then you must abide in death, with no prospect but that of a certain fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. Oh, look to Jesus, the Savior! Only as you look to Him can there be a happy future for you. God help you to do so at once, for His dear names sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONMark 16:1-14; Luke 24:33-48; 1 John 1.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK909, 309, 306.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2408 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHRIST THE CURE FOR TROUBLED HEARTS   
NO. 2408

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, APRIL 14, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, APRIL 10, 1887.

**And He said unto them, Why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your hearts.   
Luke 24:38.**

IT seems, from these questions of our Lord, that true Believers may come into a troubled state of mind. The eleven were truly Christs disciples and even His Apostles, yet, when their faith failed them and they refused to believe the testimony that Christ was risen from the dead, they were troubled in their minds and tossed to and fro, as on a stormy sea. Unbelief is a great troubler. Our peace comes to us by faith and if our faith grows weak, our peace of mind is apt to decline and we are likely to become much disturbed in spirit. If those who are Believers, who have passed from death unto life, are sometimes troubled, you may be sure that others are! It is no wonder that they are troubled who have never experienced the Grace of God in conversion and have never felt the joy which Jesus brings to those whom He saves. If every unconverted man could see his true state, he would not dare to give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, until he had been brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ. If you who are living without a Savior realized your lost condition, your pillows would be stuffed with thorns instead of with feathers. I scarcely think that your bread would be sweet to your taste, or that light would be pleasant to your eyes, if you really knew your present condition and the jeopardy in which your souls are found. I tremble for you and I shall be glad if you learn to tremble for yourselvesand to flee from the wrath to come!

I want, at this time, to speak more particularly to some who are, in a measure, awakened and awakened to their real position before God, and have been so for a long while. They are not happy. They never will be happy until a very great change comes over them, yet I do not see why they should not, at once, have done with doubts, fears and troubled thoughts, and enter immediately into rest and peace. I say that I do not see why they should not receive this great blessing, but I see a great many reasons why they should! I can truly say that when I preach to you, I labor with all my heart and soul to bring you to the Cross of Christ. And I have sometimes thought, when I am going home, That was a poor sermon if it is judged merely by the rules of rhetoric, yet it was such a sermon that if I could have heard it, myself, when I was in despairwhen I was longing for salvationit would have been worth a Jews eye to me, for it would have been the very thing I needed to show me the road to Heaven. It would have been a key to unlock my dungeon door and to set me at liberty.

And I am praying that it may be so nowevery word I speak is steeped in prayer that some of my truly anxious hearers, who would be right if they could, may now end their wanderings at the Crosshave done with their uneasiness and restlessnessand find peace in Jesus Christ the Savior! So, with that objective in view, I am going to take the question out of its context and, though Jesus put it to His eleven Apostles, I shall venture to address it to you who are very far from being Apostleswho are not yet even disciples, but who, at least, wish that you were numbered, even, among the least of Gods people! To you I say, in the words of the text, Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?

I. And, first, THIS QUESTION IS WORTH CONSIDERINGWhy are you troubled?   
Many of you are troubled. Some of you are very greatly troubled, though not always to the same extent. You shake off your anxiety, sometimes. Unhappy men that you are, that you should be able to shake off a trouble which is driving you to the Savior! You get out into company. You become immersed in business and you forget this great sorrow, this sad perplexity. But, after a while, it comes back to you. A little sickness, or a death in the family, or even the east wind and the fogs, with the dullness that often accompanies them, will bring back to you those sorrowful thoughts and you are again troubled!   
And you have many questions in your heartyou cannot get rid of them. It has been so with you for mouths! I know some with whom it has been so for yearsthey have been attending my ministry, perhaps, or the ministry of some other preacher of the Word, and, after a sermon which has been pressing and personal, they feel dreadfully uneasy. They cannot tell what to make of themselves and, sometimes, they have said, This state of things must come to an end. We cannot any longer endure to have this indefinable something, this mysterious fear which haunts us, and takes away the very joy of life.   
It will be a good thing to ask this question, Why are we so troubled? because it would be a great pity to be troubled for nothing. If there is no cause for the anxiety, let us get rid of it! Count it one of the wisest actions to battle with despondency. I do not suppose there is any man in this place who is naturally more inclined to despondency than I am, but when I feel this pressure upon my spirit, I seek to overcome it by hoping in God. I say to myself, Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God. When I press the question home and find that there is nothing, really, to disquiet me, I am not disquieted any longer! And I suppose that you are of much the same make as I am and, if you look your trouble fairly in the face, and you find that there is nothing in it, then you will shake yourself loose from it and come to a cheery state of heart once more!  
But suppose that there should be something that ought to cause you anxietyis it not best, at once, to make a full investigation of the matter? It may be that the cure of the evil lies in the search for it. Here is a man who is half afraid that he has contracted a disease, but, if so, at present it is only in its early stages. Now, if he is a foolish man, he will say, I shall not trouble about it. If it gets to be much worse, then I will see to it. But if he is a wise, intelligent man, he says, I must know the ins and outs of this affair. I will go to the best physician I can find and he shall thoroughly examine me, and I will know what these symptoms mean, for, even if there is disease, perhaps it may be nipped in the bud and my life may yet be saved. If I go to the doctor at once, he may be able to battle with this mischief before it takes a greater hold upon me. I think that he is a very sensible man to say to himself, Suppose that my health is all wrong? Possibly there is a cure for my maladyI will go and see if I can have this cure.

Remember that the first thing you ought to see to is your soul. Sirs, by all means, attend to your health! Look well to the title deeds of your property, make your wills, and so forth, but, first of all, see to the wellbeing of your immortal nature, for what will you do if you should pass into another world and find yourselves forever shut out from hope? What an awful thing that would be! Therefore, first and foremost, look to that which is to last forever and make your calling and election sure! God help you, by His Grace, to see to this matter this very hour! If there is a cure to be had anywhere, there will be no particular reason for fearing and being troubled if we resolve to go and obtain it. If it is, indeed, put within our reach, let us stretch out our hand and take it at onceand so end our troubles and questions in the best manner possibleby getting the cure for our disease, the heal-all for our soul-sickness! The disciples, at the time mentioned in our text, were troubled, because, when Jesus stood in their midst, they supposed that it was a spirit, a ghostyet it was no ghost, it was the real living Lord Jesus, whom they afterwards handled, who was there, but, they supposed that they had seen a spirit, and therefore, they were terrified and frightened.   
I wonder whether your present troubles arise out of a supposition. I have known some who have said to me, I am afraid, Sir, and this is my daily trouble, that God has never chosen me to eternal salvation. Suppose that, after all, I should not be one of His elect? Now, listen suppose that you should be one of His elect? Is there not as much sense in supposing the one thing as the other? And suppose that you were to leave off supposingthat would be a very sensible thing to do! There is not much good that ever comes by indulging suppositions of that kind! Neither you nor I can climb to Heaven and unfold that roll. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God. Leave that secret thing with Him. I will tell you something in which there is no supposition. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out. Under no supposable circumstance will Jesus Christ ever cast away a sinner who comes to Him! Therefore, kindly leave the supposing alone and just take the certainty that whoever comes to Christ, He will in no wise cast out. I hear another one say, But suppose I have committed the unpardonable sin? To which I answer, But suppose you have not? And there is just as much reason for supposing one way as supposing the other. And again I say, suppose you are wise enough to leave off supposing altogether? If you have committed the unpardonable sin, I should really like to know what it is, for, after reading, I think, as much of sound divinity as anybody, I have never yet been able to discover what it is! Nor have I ever met with any divine who has even seemed to me to approximate to any sure and certain description of what the unpardonable sin may be. This much I do know about itit is called a sin that is unto death. And as soon as a man commits it, a spiritual death steals over him, so that he never desires mercy, never is conscious of his guilt and never wishes to find salvation by Jesus Christ. He becomes dead! So dead that it is not merely the sin which is, itself, unpardonable, but the condition of heart into which it throws the man, so that he never seeks pardon, or even wishes for it. Now, my dear Friends, you know that you have not come to that terrible state because you are always restless about your souls salvation and always wishing that by some means you might be saved!   
Whatever supposition you bring, I believe that I can sweep your supposition away, or that it deserves to be swept away. Therefore, do not be in doubt or fear because of a supposition. I could bother you with suppositions if I liked to do so. Suppose there were to be an earthquake. Suppose that top gallery were to come tumbling down. Why, I could go on supposing till I had frightened every nervous soul in the place! But what a fool I would be and what fools you would be to be frightened thereby! I pray you, believe me, that there is enough in the black facts of your case to trouble you without your vexing yourself unnecessarily by suppositions! It used to be thought to be a mark of sanctity for a man to wear a hair shirt and an iron belt round his waist which covered him with sores. We know better than that, now! Therefore, why make a hair shirt of suppositions and an iron belt of pure inventions of your own imagination? Get rid of them all, I beseech you!   
But suppose that you have done with suppositions, yet it may be possible that you are troubled with doubts. Why do doubts arise in your hearts? You are unable to get peace because you have certain doubts in your hearts. Well, what are your doubts?   
I have been thinking, says one, perhaps the Bible is not true. Now, when these disciples thought that Jesus, Himself, was not really there, but that it was only a vision, our Savior said to them, Handle Me, and see. And the best way to prove whether the Bible is true is not to stand and listen to the evil suggestions of skeptics against it, but to hear its own challenge, Handle Me, and see. There is something wonderfully substantial in the religion of Jesus Christ!   
To me, it is life, joy, comfort, strengtheverything! I handle it and I have tried and proved it for myself, these many years, but I do not expect my experience to stand in the place of your own experience of it. Go to Christ with prayer, yourself. Go to God with repentance, yourself, and see whether He does not pardon you, bless you, change you and make a new creature of you! And when He has done that, believe me, you will never again doubt whether the Bible is true, for when it shall have saved you from your fears, rescued you from your sins and brought you into life and light and liberty, you will be absolutely certain that it is true because you have tried and tested it yourself!   
Oh, but I have a different thought from that! says another friend, I think that I cannot be saved because I do not feel all that I ought to feel. I have not had sufficient horror of sin. I have not felt myself to be the worst sinner who ever lived. In fact, I do not think I can ever drag myself down to that state of despair which I have read of as the experience of a great many who have been saved. Now that is another of your foolish thoughts which you had better give up thinking! Who told you that you must weep a certain quantity of tears? Who told you that you must feel a certain degree of anguish? That Book has not told you so, nor has Gods preacher! But we are continually telling you that the suffering on account of sin was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ, that the Atonement for human guilt is in His precious blood and that you may come to Him just as you are! Have we not often tried to draw a line of distinction between repentance, which is the fruit of the Spirit, and despair, which is a temptation of the devil? Many, no doubt, come to Christ in black despair, but why should you not come with great hopefulness expecting that He will bless you? And if you do so come, depend upon it that He will not send you away empty. Get rid of that foolish thought, I pray you, and believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord. May the Holy Spirit help you to do so!   
Perhaps a third troubled one says, My thought is, Sir, that, if I professed to be a Christian, I should not live up to it. I heard a good reply to that remark from one who came to see me last week. One said to her, You know, if you make a profession of religion, you must live up to it. Oh, she answered, all the profession I make is that I put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christand I put my trust in Him to help me to live up to itI dare trust Him as far as that. Mind that you do the same and get rid, altogether, of the thought that it is you, by yourself, who has to live up to your profession. Salvation is of the Lord, alone! You have to accept Grace from Christ for nothing and He will delight to give it to you. And He will also delight to continue to give you all the Grace you need till He brings you safely home to Glory!   
Our Lord asked His disciples, Why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your hearts? There are some who say, It is the feelings that we have in our heart that causes us anxiety. Well now, what are your feelings? As a rule, I care much more about faith than about feelings, but for once, tell me what your feelings are, you who are troubled and vexed with anxious thoughts.  
Well, Sir, says one, I am afraid that I shall not be saved. But why not? Oh, I do not know why, but I am afraid I will not! Well, do you not think that you are very foolish? If you will think of it a little, you will be sure that you are. Because, when a person says, I am so fearful, and you ask, What are you afraid of? and he says, Oh, I do not know, but I am so fearful! you would say to him, My dear fellow, if you do not know what it is that you fear, then give up being fearful! If you have nothing to be afraid of, do not be afraid, for what can be the reason of it?   
Oh, but, Sir, says another, I feelwell, to make short work of it, I feel that it is too good to be true. What is too good to be true? Why, that I may have my sins forgiven simply upon my believing and may now, at once, become a child of God! Too good to be true, is it? Well, it would be too good to be true if it came from youbut as it comes from God, nothing is too good to be true of the good and gracious God! He is willing to blot out all your sins if you will but trust to the Lord Jesus Christ. However much you may have transgressed against His Laws, He is prepared to pass an act of amnesty and oblivion and to blot out all your transgressions! Your wanderings, your blasphemies, even, He is ready to forgive more ready to forgive than you are to be forgivenand He puts it simply thus, Believe in My Son. Trust that He whom I have appointed to save you will save you and, upon your so trusting, your transgressions are forgiven and you are saved.

It is a great message that we have to deliver. Would you have a little Gospel from a great God? Would you have a little Gospel from that great Savior who was the Son of God and yet died upon the Cross? If it had been less than it is, you would have begun to quibble about its littleness! But now that it is so great, I pray you, do not quarrel with great mercy, but receive it, believe it, believe it at once and let your doubts and fears end from this time forth, through the effectual working of Gods gracious Spirit!   
I have lingered too long over this first division, yet I hope I have convinced you that the question is worth considering.   
II. The question we have now to consider is thisHAS YOUR TROUBLE ANYTHING TO DO WITH JESUS? This is what our Lord meant by enquiring of His disciples, Why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Their trouble had to do with Jesus, but they had made a great mistake concerning Him.   
Well, you say, this subject of Jesus and His salvation, it is all a supernatural business. Do all supernatural matters frighten you? Yes, Sir, they do. I am afraid of that which goes beyond the verge of things that can be seen. You will be there, yourself, before longwhether you are afraid of it or not, you will die. As surely as you are in this Tabernacle, you will have to do with that which is supernatural! You may live a considerable time, perhaps, if you are a young man, but it will seem a very short while when you come to the end of it. And then death, Heaven, Hell, angels, God, the Judgement Seat and eternity will have to be dealt with by you! Oh, it would be a great mercy if you could now get to be familiar with these things! Think where you wish to live foreveryou had better learn the language of the country! It would be well for you to begin to understand something of the world to come, for come it will, and there is no putting it off. The strongest man in this place will have to die and it is a reflection which often forces itself upon me that poor, weak, sickly people keep on living when you thought that they would have been dead years agobut your fine, strong, healthy menthese are they of whom we hear, Such an one died at the railway station. Or, Such an one was taken all of a sudden, and is gone. Therefore, see to this matter, Sir! See to it at once! You will have to deal with the supernatural sooner or later, so had you not better begin now?   
Oh, you say, but this Lord Jesus Christ, in whom you tell me to trust, seems so unreal. I cannot see Him and handle Him, as those Apostles did. He is so unreal to me. Yes, so the Apostles thought, you know. They thought that they saw a ghostyet there is nothing more real in all the world than our Lord Jesus Christ! I wish that you would seek Him tonight. I wish that you would get to that little room of yours and kneel at your bedside, and cry, Savior, if You are, indeed, a Savior, here is a sinner who longs to be saved! Come and save me. If you do so, you shall soon find that though not gripped with the hands, or seen with the eyes, yet there is no brighter, truer, or more living reality than Jesus Christ, the Son of God!   
But, Sir, you cry, this believing seems so vague and indistinct. If you told me something that I had to do, I would try to do it. If I had to go barefoot from here to John OGroats House, for instance, I would know what that meant and I would start tomorrow morning, or, if necessary tonight. Yes, I daresay you would, but, after all, there is nothing more vague in your being told to believe in Jesus than there would be in bidding you to walk barefoot to John OGroats House. To believe in Jesus is a most simple matter, easily understood, even by a childit is just to trust Him, that is all. To believe that what is written concerning Him is true and then to trust yourself entirely to Himthat will save you. Look, I have thrown my whole weight upon this platform rail. If that should go down, I shall go down. Do just that with the Lord Jesusthrow your whole weight on Him. If He cannot save you, be lost. I must be lost, I am sure, if He cannot save me. My whole and only hope hangs on those dear hands that were nailed to the Cross. My only trust is in that precious blood which flowed from His pierced side. I risk my eternal destiny with Him and feel that there is no risk whatever in doing so! Now, tell me, is that vague? It seems to me to be very distinct and clear.   
Well, says one, but, somehow, Christ seems so unapproachable. I cannot get at Him. Now, that is the last thing that you ought to say, for He will receive you if you breathe only a silent prayer to Him. In the pew down there, sitting on your seat, or standing in the aisle, or away up in the gallery, just speak to Him in your heart and He will hear you in a moment. Unapproachable? Why, beloved Friends, there is nobody so approachable as Christ! A wish will reach Him, a tear has already found HimHe is everywhere present wherever there is any heart that longs to obtain salvation through Him!   
Then I fancy that I hear one of you say, I feel that He is so holy that I, so guilty, cannot come to Him. Would you have Him to be unholy, then? If He were so, how could He save you? But, being holy, yet He bids you come to Him. Then why do you not come? Why do you make a barrier out of such a glorious fact as this, that Christ is good, just and true? Remember that this, also, is true, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. If He does not save sinners, then He came into this world to mock us! He came into this world for nothing and if you, being a sinner, will come to Christ and Christ rejects you, He has forgotten His commission, He has belied His Character! He must give up His name, for He is no longer Jesus if He does not save sinners that come to Him, yes, and if He does not save sinners that do not come to Him, too, for He has come to seek and to saveboth to seek and to savethat which was lost.   
But, says yet another, I cannot think that the Lord Jesus Christ would take any notice of me. Oh, that I could nail your wretched, miserable thoughts of my great Lord up on His Cross! Oh, but I am nobody, Sir! Christ died for nobodies! But I am poor. The poor have the Gospel preached to them. But I am quite illiterate. Yes, and it is to such that a plain Gospel is sent by our gracious Savior. But I am altogether obscure and unknown. Oh, no, you are not! The Lord Jesus knows all about you! Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not suppose that if you were rich, Christ would think any more of you than He does now! You know how it is among menif a man wears a good coat and a diamond ring, people give him a seat as soon as he comes into the aisle!   
Yes, but that is not the spirit of Jesus Christ! He does not care about your diamond rings and your satin dresses. My Lord Himself wore a smock frock, woven from the top, throughout, a garment without seam. He was dressed as the most plain and humble of peasants dressed, and He delighted to associate with the poorest of the poor. Therefore, do not tell me that He will not condescend to look at you! My Lord would leave off listening to the songs of angels to hear a poor sinner cry! If it were some grand review day in Heaven, when cherubim and mailed seraphim marched before His august eye, He would leave the camp of angels to come and listen to a beggars prayer, for, remember, He is a Man as truly as He is God, and everything that is human touches that true heart of His that was pierced for men. Therefore, cry to Him, ask Him to have mercy upon you and He will stand still, as He did when blind Bartimaeus cried to Him! And He will command you to be brought before Himand then He will say to you, What will you that I should do for you? And He will give you spiritual sight and spiritual health in answer to your prayer. Come to Him, however poor, weak and insignificant you may be, and you shall soon prove that it is even as I say.   
If you have made any mistakes about my Lord and Master, I hope that what I have said may help to remove them.   
III. Now, lastly, and may God bless this word to you, dear troubled Friend, to bring you to the Savior! JESUS RIGHTLY KNOWN WILL MEET EVERY TROUBLE OF EVERY SEEKING SOUL.   
If you did but know Him, you would find an end to your trouble at once! Those lines are quite true   
*His worth, if all the nations knew,   
Surely the whole world would love Him too.*   
If men did but know what a Savior He is, they would never rest till they had proved Him to be their Savior!   
Let me tell you a few things that may help to end all your troubles. First, Jesus Christ is alive. He died, but He rose again. He is alive and living among men. Spiritually, He is still on earth. His bodily Presence is in Heaven, but His spiritual Presence is everywhere   
*Wherever we seek Him, He is found.*

He is alive, active, living, present with us here, giving us His benedictions, working out His Divine projectsa living present force among the myriads of this citya living present Person in this House of Prayer.

Next, Jesus Christ lives as One who has made a full Atonement for sin. Do you know what that means? This is what I understand by Atonement. We were guilty. We had sinned and the Law of God has bound punishment to sin with iron clamps. I am sure that the only way in which the world is to be governed is by this Law of God, that the consequences of evil must be evil. If men will do wrong, they must be punished. With all reverence, we may say that God Himself cannot reverse that Law, for it is a right and proper Law. Well, then, Jesus Christ came and bore the consequences of human sin in His own body on the tree and those who believe in Jesus Christ, by the very act of believing, accept Him to be their Substitute, bearing their guilt and punishment, and being unto God a Sacrifice instead of them. Therefore, as many as have believed in Jesus Christ may know for sure that He died in their place.

I remember talking, one day, to a poor man, an Irishman, and trying to make this point very plain to him. I said, Now suppose you had committed a murder and you were to be hanged for it. Yes, he replied, and I should deserve it. But suppose I should go to the Queen and say to her, I am willing to be hanged, instead of this man. Such is my love for him that, to set him free and yet to honor the law, I will consent to die in his place? The man said, That would be very kind of you, Sir. Well, suppose that the Queen had the ability to consent to it and I could be accepted as your substituteand I were hanged instead of youwould the policeman take you up for that murder? Oh, no! he exclaimed, I would say, You cant touch me. Why, the gentleman was hanged instead of me! Therefore, I am free.

That is exactly the way of salvation. Jesus Christ suffered in the place of all of you who trust in Him and you are clear before the bar of Divine Justice. Every man who believes in Jesus Christ, that is, trusts Him, may know without doubt that Christ was, for him, a certain and effectual Substitute by which his sin was put away on the Cross. Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Now, if you understand that great Truth of God, I think that your doubts and fears ought to come to an end at once.

Remember, also, that Jesus Christ lives to give repentance and remission of sins. In this very chapter we read that He bade His Apostles go and preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations! He says to you, Turn from your sin and I will turn from My anger. Quit your sin and your sin is forgiven. Leave it. Loathe it and I will grant you immediate pardon for the sake of the great atoning Sacrifice. This Truth, also, if it is fully believed, should bring peace and joy to your heart and mind!

Please remember, also, that the Lord Jesus Christ lives to pray for sinners. He lives to make intercession for the transgressors! He lives to give to sinners the Holy Spirit to work in them true belief and true repentance! He lives mighty to save, to do for you what you cannot do for yourself, to bear you up and bear you through, and bring you, at last, to His own right hand!

Brothers and Sisters, as I trust my Lord Jesus Christ, myself, with all my heart, with all my future, my past, my present, with, indeed, everything, and as I feel perfect peace in doing so, I would to God that you would do the same, that you might feel the same peace, and get strength within to bear the troubles of this mortal life. Did you ever hear what good John Hyatt, who used to preach to the sailors, said when he was dying? Someone asked him, Mr. Hyatt, can you trust Jesus with your soul, now? Trust Jesus with my soul! he exclaimed, if I had ten thousand souls, I could trust them all with Him! We are not ten thousand here, tonightwe are somewhat under that numberbut oh, that we might all come and trust our souls with Jesus! Then, in that Last Great Day, with sweet clamor of praise, with united tempests of song, we will bless that dear crucified but now exalted Savior who will not fail one of us, but will bring us to see His face in Glory!

Will you not trust Him tonight? Dear Friend, you might go down those stairs, you know, with a firm foot, saying, I am a saved man. Yes, out of this area many a troubled heart may make its way and go home with all the bells ringing out sweet hallelujahsI have believed! I am forgiven! I am the chief of sinners, but I am forgiven, for I have trusted where God bids me trust. And now, because I am forgiven and am a child of God, I will live a new life, and I will serve the Lord with all my heart.

You good soldiers who are here, tonight, I hope you are already good soldiers of Jesus Christ. But if you are not, I would like to be the recruiting sergeant and enlist you beneath the standard of the Cross. Only trust my Lord and you shall be saved in the day of battle, and saved in the hour of deathyes, and saved amidst the temptations of this wicked city. He shall cover you! He, Himself, shall cover you and you shall be perfectly safe beneath that Divine Shelter! Who will trust Christ and be saved? Lord, give us many souls, tonight, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MARK 16:1-14; LUKE 24:32-44.**

Mark 16:1, 2. And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. Their love made them prompt. Their affection was about to attempt a needless and, indeed, impossible thing. Yet I do not doubt that it was acceptable before God. Oh, that we had such love that even the dead body of the Christ should be so dear to us that we would be ready, at great expense, to anoint it! I fear that, nowadays, even His living Word is not valued as it should be. How few, therefore, should we be likely to find who would have cared for His dead body? These holy women had had cause enough to love their Lord and they showed that their hearts were full of affection for Him even after He had been taken from them.

3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? A question that has puzzled many other people concerning many other things perplexed these holy women, yet there was no reason for the question to be raised at all. Perhaps some of you are, at this time, distressed when there is no cause for distress, and in fear where no fear is. It was so with these women who said, one to another, Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

4. And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And, therefore, hard to roll away and, therefore, the more easily seen when it was rolled away! And, therefore, the greater cause for joy that it was rolled away! In the greatness of our troubles there may often be space for the greater display of the goodness of God! A great trial may be nothing more than the prelude of a great joy. Do not dread the foaming billows, for they may wash you ashoreit is the worst that they can doand it is also the best. The stone at the door of the sepulcher was very great, but it was rolled away, so that it mattered not to the women how great it was.

5. And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were frightened. An angel had been allowed to assume the appearance of a manthat usually seems to be the way in which angels appear to men. I suppose there is, after all, a great kinship between angels and men, otherwise angelic beings would not so constantly assume that form when they appear to men. At the sight of the young man clothed in a long white garment, these good women were frightened.

6, 7. And he said to them, Be not frightened: You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goes before you into Galilee: there shall you see Him, as He said unto you. Make sure, Beloved, that you know the Truth of God for yourselves and then hasten to tell it to others. I pray you, run not without knowing what your errand is to be, but I also pray you, when you have an errand for the Lord, do not tarry, but, Go your way, tell His disciples. It was very thoughtful of this angel to say, and Peter, thus linking with the disciples the name of him who had most glaringly transgressed and denied his Master,

8. And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid. But, after this, they summoned up courage and did tell the story of their Lords resurrection.

9-13. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the rest: neither believed they them. Unbelief is very hard to kill, even in hearts that are right with God. So we need not wonder that Divine Grace is required to expel unbelief from the hearts of the unregenerate!

14. Afterward He appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. The story of our Lords appearance to the disciples is more fully told by Luke in the 24th Chapter of his Gospel, to which let us turn.

Luke 24:32-35. And they said, one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with as by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen, indeed, and has appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread. These were the two disciples who had recognized their Lord in the breaking of bread, though they did not know Him during their walk with Him to Emmaus.

36. And as they thus spoke, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. This was the common Jewish salutation, but, from then on it would be sanctified most Divinely and it would be a Christian greeting to say, Peace be unto you.

37-44. But they were terrified and frightened and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself; handle Me and see; far a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have you here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. Notice the seals which our Lord continually set upon the Old Testament, the manner in which He always treated the Scripture, the reverent way in which He confessed its Infallibilityand His determination that in every item, every jot and tittleit should be fulfilled by Himself. This was often manifested before His death and, on His return from the grave, He had not changed His mind! He here speaks of the three great parts into which the Old Testament was divided by the Jews and He expressly sets the seal of His royal assent upon the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. May we, in like manner, prize the whole Inspired Word!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #250 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE WOUNDS OF JESUS   
NO. 254

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 30, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**He showed them His hands and His feet.   
Luke 24:40.**

I HAVE selected this sentence as the text, although I shall not strictly adhere to it. What was to be seen on Christs hands and feet? We are taught that the prints of the nails were visible and that in His side there was still the gash of the spear. For did He not say to Thomas? Reach here your finger and behold My hands and reach here your hand and thrust it into My side and be not faithless, but believing? I wish to draw your attention to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ, when He rose again from the dead, had in His body the marks of His passion. If He had pleased He could readily have removed them. He rose again from the dead and He might have erased from His body everything which could be an indication of what He had suffered and endured before He descended into the tomb. But, no, instead, there were the pierced hands and feet and there was the open side. What was the reason for this? There was no absolute necessity for itit could easily have been dispensed with. What, then, were the reasons? I shall endeavor to enter into this subject and I hope we may draw some profitable instructions from there.

First, what influence did the exhibition of the hands and feet have upon the disciples? Secondly, why is it that Jesus Christ, now in Heaven, bears with Him the scars in His flesh? And, then, thirdly, is there any lesson for us in the fact that Jesus Christ still wears His wounds? I think there is.

I. First, then, OF WHAT USE WAS THE EXHIBITION OF THOSE WOUNDS TO THE DISCIPLES? I reply at once that they were infallible proofs that He was the same Person. He said, Behold My hands and feet, that it is, I, Myself. It was to establish His identity, that He was the very same Jesus whom they had followed, whom at last they had deserted, whom they had beheld afar off crucified and slain and whom they had carried to the tomb in the gloom of the evening. It was the very same Christ who was now before them and they might know itfor there was the seal of His sufferings upon Him. He was the same Person. The hands and feet could testify to that. You know, Beloved, had not some such evidence been visible upon our Savior, it is probable that His disciples would have been unbelieving enough to doubt the identity of His Person. Have

you ever seen men changed, extremely changed in their external appearance? I have known a man, perhaps, five or six years ago. He has passed through a world of suffering and pain and when I have seen him again, I have declared, I should not have known you if I had met you in the street.

Now, when the disciples parted with Jesus it was at the Lords Supper. They then walked with Him into the garden. There did the Savior sweat, as it were great drops of blood. Do you not imagine that such a wrestling, such a bloody sweat as that, must have had some effect upon His visage? It had surely had enough to mar it before. But now the plowshares of grief were sharpened and anguish made deep furrows upon Him. There must have been lines of grief upon His brow, deeper than they had ever seen before. This would have produced a change great enough to make them forget His countenance. Nor was this all. You know he had to undergo the flagellation at the pillar of the Praetorian and then to die. Can you imagine that a man could pass through the process of death, through such astonishing agony as that which the Savior endured and yet that there should be no change in his visible appearance? I can conceive that in passing through such a furnace as this, the very lineaments of Christs face would seem to have been melted and would have need to be restruck before the disciples could discern that He was the same. Besides that, when Jesus rose, He rose, you know, as He now sits in Heaven. His body was flesh and bone, but, nevertheless, it had miraculous powers. It was capable of entering into a room without the ordinary modes of access. We find our Savior standing in the midst of His disciples, the doors being shut.

I believe that Jesus had a body such as we are to have in the next world. Jesus Christ was not a phantom or spectra. His body was not a spirit. It was a real body. And so in Heaven imagine not that we are to be spirits. We are to be spirits until the great resurrection day. But, then, our spirit is afterwards to receive a spiritual body. It is to be clothed upon. It is not forever to be a naked, bodiless spirit. That body will be to all intents and purposes the same body which shall be laid in the tomb. It is sown in dishonor and the same it is raised in Gloryit is sown in weakness and the same it is raised in power. Mark, Jesus was still flesh! All flesh is not the same fleshall bodies have not the same qualities. So our Saviors flesh was flesh that could not sufferflesh that had extraordinary powers about itflesh however, that could eat, although it was under no necessity to do so. And such may be the body, the glorified body, which shall be given to us when we shall rise at the first resurrection and shall be made like unto our Head.

But, now, think! If Christ had to undergo in His countenance those matchless transformations, that must have been, first of all, connected with His bloody sweat, then, with His agony and after that, with the transforming, or, if I may use such a word, the transmutation of His body into a spiritual body, can you not conceive that His likeness would be changedthat the disciples would scarcely know Him if there had not been some deeply graven marks whereby they would be able to recognize Him? The disciples looked upon the very face, but, even then they doubted. There was a majesty about Him which most of them had not seen. Peter, James and John, had seen Him transfigured, when His garments were whiter than any fuller could make them. But the rest of the disciples had only seen Him as a Man of Sorrows. They had not seen Him as the glorious Lord and, therefore, they would be apt to doubt whether He was the same. But these nail-prints, this pierced sidethese were marks which they could not disputewhich unbelief itself could not doubt. And they all were convinced and confessed that He was the Lord. And even faithless Thomas, was constrained to cry, My Lord and my God!

II. Let us turn to the second questionWhy SHOULD CHRIST WEAR THESE WOUNDS IN HEAVEN AND OF WHAT AVAIL ARE THEY? Let me give you some thoughts upon the matter.

I can conceive, first, that the wounds of Christ in Heaven will be a theme of eternal wonder to the angels. An old writer represents the angels as saying, Oh, Lord of Glory, what are these wounds in Your hands? They had seen Him depart from Heaven and they had gone with Him as far as they might go, singing, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth. Some of them had watched Him through His pilgrimage, for He was seen of angels. But when He returned, I doubt not that they crowded round Him, bowed before Him in adoration and then put the holy question, What are these wounds in Your hands? At any rate they were enabled to behold for themselves in Heaven the man who suffered and they could see the wounds which were produced in His body by His sufferings. And I can readily imagine that this would cause them to lift their songs higher, would prolong their shouts of triumph and would cause them to adore Him with a rapture of wonderment such as they had never felt before. And I doubt not that every time they look upon His hands and behold the crucified Man exalted by His Fathers side, they are afresh wrapped in wonder and again they strike their harps with more joyous fingers at the thought of what be must have suffered who thus bears the sears of His hard-fought battles.

AgainChrist wears these scars in His body in Heaven as His ornaments. The wounds of Christ are His glories, they are His jewels and His precious things. To the eye of the Believer Christ is never so glorious,

never so passing fair, as when we can say of Him, My Beloved is white and ruddy, white with innocence and ruddy with His own blood. He never seems so beautiful as when we can see Him as the rose and the lily. As the lily, matchless purity and as the rose, crimsoned with His own gore. We may talk of Christ in His beauty, in many places raising the dead and stilling the tempest, but oh, there never was such a matchless Christ as He that did hang upon the Cross. There I behold all His beauties, all His attributes developed, all His love drawn out, all His character expressed in letters so legible that even my poor stammering heart can read those lines and speak them out againas I see them written in crimson upon the bloody tree.

Beloved, these are to Jesus what they are to us. They are His ornaments, His royal jewels, His fair array. He does not care for the splendor and pomp of kings. The thorny crown is His diadema diadem such as no monarch ever wore. It is true that He bears not now the scepter of reed, but there is a glory in it that there never flashed from scepter of gold. It is true He is not now buffeted and spit uponHis face is not now marred more than that of any other man by grief and sorrow, for He is glorified and full of blessedness. But He never seems so lovely as when we see Him buffeted of men for our sakes, enduring all manner of grief, bearing our iniquities and carrying our sorrows. Jesus Christ finds such beauties in His wounds that He will not renounce them. He will wear the court dress in which He wooed our souls and He will wear the royal purple of His atonement throughout eternity.

Nor are these the only ornaments of Christthey are His trophiesthe trophies of His love. Have you never seen a soldier with a gash across his forehead or in his cheek? Why every soldier will tell you the wound in battle is no disfigurementit is his honor. If said he, I received a wound when I was retreating, a wound in the back, that were to my disgrace. If I have received a wound in a victory, then it is an honorable thing to be wounded. Now Jesus Christ has scars of honor in His flesh and glory in His eyes. He has other trophiesHe has divided the spoil with the strongHe has taken the captive away from his tyrant master. He has redeemed for Himself a host that no man can number, who are all the trophies of His victoriesbut these scarsthese are the memorials of the fight and these the trophies, too.

Do you not know it was from the side of Jesus that Death sucked its death? Jesus did hang upon the Cross and Death thought to get the victory. Yes, but in its victory it destroyed itself. There are three things in Christ that Death never met with before, all of which are fatal to it. There was in Christ innocence. Now, as long as man was innocent, he could not die. Adam lived as long as he was innocent. Now Christ was about to die. But Death sucked in innocent blood. He sucked in his own poison and he died. Again, blessedness is that which takes away the sting of death. Now Christ, even when He was dying, was God over all, blessed forever. All that Death had ever killed before was under the curse. But this man was never by nature under the cursebecause for our sakes He was not born into this world a cursed man. He was the seed of woman, it is true, but still not of carnal generation. He did come under the curse when He took upon Himself our sins, but not for His own sins. He was in Himself blessed. Death sucked in blessed bloodhe had never done that before all others have been under the curseand that slew Death. It was innocence combined with blessedness that was the destruction of Death.

Yet another thing. Death had never met before with any man who had life in himself. But when Death drunk Christs blood it drunk life. For His blood is the life of the soul and is the seed of life eternal. Where ever it goes, does it not give life to the dead? And Death, finding that it had drunk into its own veins life in the form of Jesus blood gave up the ghost. And Death itself is dead, for Christ has destroyed it, by the sacrifice of Himself. He has put it away. He has said, Oh death, where is your sting? Oh grave, where is your victory? But now, since it was from these very wounds that Death sucked in its own death and that Hell was destroyed since these were the only weapons of a weaponless Redeemer, He wears and bears them as His trophies in Heaven. David laid up Goliaths sword before the Lord forever. Jesus lays up His wounds before the Lord, for His wounds were His weapons and this is why He wears them still.

I was thinking while coming here of Jesus Christ in Heaven with His wounds and another thought struck me. Another reason why Jesus wears His wounds is that when He intercedes He may employ them as powerful advocates. When He rises up to pray for His people, He needs not speak a word. He lifts His hands before His Fathers face. He makes bare His side and points to His feet. These are the orators with which He pleads with Godthese wounds. Oh, He must prevail! Do you not see that Christ without His wounds in Heaven might be potent enough, but there would not be that glorious simplicity of intercession which now you see. He has nothing to do but to show His hands. Him the Father hears always. His blood cries and is heard, His wounds plead and prevail.

Let us think again. Jesus Christ appears in Heaven as the Wounded One, this shows again that He has not laid aside His priesthood. You know how Watts paraphrases the idea. He says

*Looks like a lamb that has been slain, And wears His priesthood still.*

If the wounds had been removed we might have forgotten that there was a sacrifice. And, perhaps, next we might have forgotten that there was a priest. But the wounds are therethen there is a sacrifice and there is a priest, also, for He who is wounded is both Himself, the sacrifice and the priest. The priesthood of Melchisedec is a glorious subject. He who reads that with the eye of faith and is blessed with the Spirit, will find much cause for joy when he contrasts the priesthood of Christ with that of Aaron.

The priesthood of Aaron began and it finished. But the priesthood of Melchisedec had no beginning and it had no end. He was, we are told, Without beginning of days and without end of yearswithout father, without mother, without descent. Such is the priesthood of Christ! It shall never end. He Himself is without beginning and His priesthood is without end. When the last ransomed soul is brought in, when there shall be no more prayers to offer, Christ shall still be a priest. Though he has no sacrifice now to slay, for He is the sacrifice Himself, once and for all, yet still He is a Priest and when all His people as the result of that sacrifice shall be assembled around His glorious Throne, He shall still be the Priest. For You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. I take it that this is a further reason why He still bears His wounds in Heaven.

There is another and a terrible reason why Christ wears His wounds still. It is this. Christ is coming to judge the world. Christ has with himself today the accusers of His enemies. Every time that Christ lifts His hands to Heaven, the men that hate Him, or despise Him, are accused. The Jewish nation is brought in guilty every day. The cry is remembered, His blood be on us and on our children. And the sin of casting Christ away and rejecting Him, is brought before the mind of the Most High. And when Christ shall come a second time to judge the world in righteousness, seated on the great white throne, that hand of His shall be the terror of the universe. They shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for their sins. They would not mourn with hopeful penitence in timethey shall mourn with sorrowful remorse throughout eternity. When the multitude are gathered together, when in the valley of Jehoshaphat Christ shall judge the nations, what need He to summon accusers? His own wounds are His witnesses. Why need He summon any to convict men of sin? His own side bears their handiwork. You murderers, did you not do this? You sons of an evil generation did you not pierce the Savior? Did you not nail Him to the tree? Behold these holes in My hand and this stab in My side. These are swift witnesses against you to condemn you!

There is a terrible side, then to this question. A crucified Christ with His wounds still open will be a terrible sight for an assembled universe. Well, says one of my congregation, What is that to us? We have not crucified the Savior. No, but let me assure you that His blood shall be on you. If you die unbelievers His blood shall be required at your hand. The death of Christ was worked by the hand of manhood, of all and entire manhood. Others did it for you and though you gave no consent verbally, yet you do assent in your heart every day. As long as you hate Christ you give an assent to His death. As long as you reject His sacrifice and despise His love, you give evidence in your hearts that you would have crucified the Lord of Glory had you been there. No, and you do yourself, so far as you can, crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shame. When you laugh at His people, when you despise His Word and mock at His ordinances, you are driving nails into His hands and thrusting the spear into His side. Therefore those open hands and that pierced side shall be witnesses against you, even against you, if you die rejecting Him and enter into eternity enemies to Christ by wicked works.

I think I have thus supplied severe excellent reasons. But now there is one more which I shall offer to your consideration before I come to the lesson which you shall learn. Christ bears those marks in His hands that, as Believers, you may never forget that He has died. We shall need, perhaps, nothing to refresh our memories in Heaven. But still, even if we should, we have it here. When we shall have been in Heaven many a thousand years we shall still have the death of Christ before uswe shall see Him reigningbut can you not conceive that the presence of the wounded Christ will often stir up the holy hearts of the celestial beings to a fresh outpouring of their grateful songs? They begin the song thus, Unto Him that lives. Jesus looks upon them and shows His hands and they add, and was dead and is alive forever more and has the keys of Hell and death. They would not forget that He died. But certainly that part of the song where it said, and was dead, will have all the more sweetness, because there He sits with the very marks of His passionwith the nailprints of His crucifixion.

If we shall be in Heaven at all constituted as we are on earth, we shall need some visible token to keep us continually in remembrance. Here, you know, the most spiritual saint needs the bread and winesweet emblems of the Saviors body. There we shall have nothing to do with emblems, for we shall have the sight of Him. And, I say, if we are in Heaven anything like what we are here, I can imagine that the presence of Jesus may be highly beneficial, may be gloriously precious to the saints in reviving their love continually and causing their hearts, which are like fountains of love, to bubble up afresh and send out again the living water of gratitude and thanksgiving.

At any rate, I know this thought is very delightful to me, that I shall see the Man that did hang on Calvarys Cross and that I shall see Him as He did hang there. I delight to see my Savior in all the glories of His Father, but I long to go back and see Him as He was, as well as He is. I think I should sometimes envy Peter and the rest of them that they should have seen Him crucified. Yes, I should say, I see Him glorified, but you saw the most marvelous sight. To see a God is an everyday sight with glorified beings, but to see a God covered with His blood, this is an extraordinary thing. To see Christ glorified, that we may see each day, but to have seen Him on that special occasion, made obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross, that was an extraordinary sight which even angels themselves could see but once. You and I cannot see that. But those wounds are there still manifest and visible and we shall be delighted with the rapturous sight of the Lord in Glory, with His wounds still fresh upon Him. May the Lord grant that we may all be there to see it. May we refresh ourselves with that glorious sight. I can say that I would part with all the joys of sense to view His face. Everything that is good on earth I would give away without a wish, without one single lingering thought, if I might but behold His face and lie in His bosom and see the dear pierced hands and the wide-open side. We must wait His pleasure. A few more rolling suns shall do it. The moon shall rise and wane for us a few more times and then, We shall see His face and never, never sin. But from the rivers of His Grace, drink endless pleasures in.

III. This brings me now to the third point. WHAT DOES CHRIST MEAN BY SHOWING TO US HIS HANDS AND FEET? He means thisthat suffering is absolutely necessary. Christ is the Head and His people are the members. If suffering could have been avoided, surely our glorious Head ought to have escaped. But inasmuch as He shows us His wounds, it is to tell us that we shall have wounds, too. Innocence ought to escape suffering. Did not Pilate mean as much when be said, I find no fault in Him, therefore let Him go? But innocence did not escape suffering. Even the Captain of our salvation must be made perfect through suffering. Therefore, we who are guilty, we who are far from being perfect, must not wonder that we have to be wounded, too. Shall the Head be crowned with thorns and do you imagine that the other members of the body are to be rocked upon the dainty lap of ease? Must Jesus Christ swim through seas of His own blood to win the crown and are you and I to walk to Heaven dry shod in silver slippers?

No, the wounds of Christ are to teach us that suffering is necessary. In fact, that doctrine was taught upon Mount Calvary. There are only three sorts of men that have ever liveda good man, a bad man and the Godman. Now, on Calvarys Cross, I see three characters, I see the thief, the representative of the bad. I see the penitent thief, the representative of the righteous, and I see the God-man in the midst. All three must suffer. Do not imagine for a moment that wicked men get through this world without suffering. Oh, no. The path to Hell is very rough, though it seems smooth. When men will damn themselves, they will not find it a very pleasurable task. The cutting the throat of ones soul is not such a pleasant operation. The drinking the poison of damnation is not, after all, an enviable task. The path of the sinner may seem to be happy, but it is not. It is a gilded deceit. He knows there is bitterness in his heart, even here on earth. Even the wicked must suffer.

But, mark, if any out of the world would have escaped it would be the God-man. But the God-man did not escape. He shows us His wounds. And do you think that you shall remain unwounded? Not if you are His, at any rate. Men sometimes escape on earth. But the true-born child of God must not and would not, if he might, for if he did, he would then give himself cause to say, I am no part of the body. If I were a part of the body, my Head suffered and so must I suffer, for I am part of His living body. That is the first lesson He teaches usthe necessity of suffering.

But next He teaches us His sympathy with us in our suffering. There, says He, see this hand! I am not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of your infirmities. I have suffered, too. I was tempted in all ways like as you are. Look here!there are the marksthere are the marks. They are not only tokens of My love, they are not only sweet forgetme-nots that bind Me to love you foreverbesides that, they are the evidence of My sympathy.

I can feel for you. Look what I have suffered. Have you a heartache? Ah, look here, what a heartache I had when this heart was pierced. Do you suffer, even unto blood wrestling against sin? So did I. I have sympathy with you. It was this that sustained the early martyrs. One of them declared that while he was suffering he fixed his eyes on Christ. And when they were pinching his fleshdragging it off with the hot harrows, when they were putting him to agonies so extraordinary that I could not dare to mention them here, lest some of you should faint even under the very narrativehe said, My soul is not insensible, but it loves. What a glorious speech was that! It lovesit loves Christ. It was not insensible, but love gave it power to overcome suffering, a power as potent as insensibility. For, said he, my eyes are fixed on Him that suffered for me and I can suffer for Him. For my soul is in His body. I have sent my heart up to Him. He is my Brother and there my heart is. Plow my flesh and break my bonessmash them with your irons, I can bear it all, for Jesus suffered and He suffers in me now. He sympathizes with me and this makes me strong.

Yes, Beloved, lay hold on this in all times of your agony. When you are sweating, think of his bloody sweat. When you are bruised, think of the whips that tore His flesh. And when you are aging, think of His death. And when God hides His face for a little from you, think of, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me! This is why He wears His wounds in His hands, that He may show that He sympathizes with you.

Another thingChrist wears these wounds to show that suffering is an honorable thing. To suffer for Christ is glory. Men will say, It is glorious to make others suffer. When Alexander rides over the necks of princes and treads nations beneath his feet, that is glorious. The Christian religion teaches us it is glorious to be trod on, glorious to be crushed, glorious to suffer. This is hard to learn. There we see it in our glorified Master. He makes His wounds His glory and His sufferings are part of the drapery of His regal attire in Paradise. Now, then, it is an honorable thing to suffer. Oh, Christian, when you are overtaken by strange troubles, be not afraid. God is near you. It was Christs honor to suffer and it is yours, too. The only degree that God gives to His people is the degree of, Masters in tribulation. If you would be one of Gods nobles you must be knighted. Men are knighted with a blow of the sword. The Lord knights us with the sword of affliction. And when we fight hard in many a battle, He makes us barons of the kingdom of HeavenHe makes us dukes and lords in the kingdom of sorrowful honornot through honor of man, but through dishonor of mannot through joy, but through suffering and grief and agony and death.

The highest honor that God can confer upon His children is the bloodred crown of martyrdom. When I read, as I have been reading lately, the story of the catacombs of Rome and those short, but very pithy inscriptions that are written over the graves of the martyrs, I felt sometimes as it I could envy them. I do not envy them their racks, their hot irons, their being dragged at the heels of horses. But I do envy them when I see them arrayed in the blood-red robe of martyrdom. Who are they that stand nearest to the eternal Throne, foremost of the saints in light? Why, the noble army of martyrs. And just as God shall give us grace to suffer for Christ, to suffer with Christ and to suffer as Christ, just so much does He honor us. The jewels of a Christian are his afflictions. The regalia of the kings, that God has made, are their troubles, their sorrows and their griefs Let us not, therefore, shun being honored. Let us not turn aside from being exalted. Griefs exalt us and troubles lift us.

Lastly, there is one sweet thought connected with the wounds of Christ that has charmed my soul and made my heart run over with delight. It is thisI have sometimes thought that if I am a part of Christs body I am a poor wounded part. If I do belong to that all-glorious whole, the Church, which is His fullness, the fullness of Him that fills all in all, yet have I said within me, I am a poor maimed part, wounded, full of putrefying sores. But Christ did not leave even His wounds behind Him, even those he took to Heaven. Not a bone of Him shall be broken, and the flesh, when wounded, shall not be discardedshall not be left. He shall carry that with Him to Heaven and He shall glorify even the wounded member. Is not this sweet, is not this precious to the troubled child of God? This, indeed, is a thought from which one may suck honey. Poor, weak and wounded though I am, He will not discard me. His wounds are healed woundsmarkthey are not running sores.

And so, though we be the wounded parts of Christ, we shall be healed. Though we shall seem to ourselves in looking back upon what we were upon earth only as wounds, only parts of a wounded body, still we shall rejoice that He has healed those wounds and that He has not cast us away. Precious, precious Truth of God! The whole body He will present before His Fathers face and wounded though He is, He shall not cast His own wounds away. Let us take comfort, then, in this. Let us rejoice therein. We shall be presented at last, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Mark, Christs wounds are no spots to Him, no wrinklesthey are ornaments. And even those parts of His Church on earth that despair of themselves, thinking themselves to be as wounds, shall be no spots, no wrinkles in the complete Church above, but even they shall be the ornaments and the glory of Christ. Let us now look up by faith and see Jesus, the wounded Jesus, sitting on His Throne. Will not this help us to gird up our loins to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God?

I cannot send you away without this last remark. Poor Sinner, you are troubled on account of sin. There is a sweet thought for you. Men are afraid to go to Christ, or else they say, My Sins are so many I cannot go to Him. He will be angry with me. Do you see His hands outstretched to you tonight? He is in Heaven and He still says, Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Are you afraid to come? Then, look at His handslook at His handswill not that induce you? Oh, but you say, I cannot think that Christ can have it in His heart to remember such a worm as I. Look at His side, there is easy access to His heart. His side is open and even your poor prayers may be thrust into that side and they shall reach His heart, holy though it is. Only look to His wounds and you shall certainly find peace through the blood of Jesus.   
There were two monks of late years in different cells in their convent.

They were reading the Bible. One of them found Christ while reading the Scriptures and he believed with a true evangelical faith. The other one was timid and could scarcely think it true. The scheme of salvation seemed so great to him he could scarcely lay hold upon it. But, at last, he lay upon the point to die and he sent for the other to come and sit by him and to shut the door, because if the superior had heard of that of which they were about to speak, he might have condemned them both.

When the monk had sat down, the sick man began to tell how his sins lay heavy on him. The other reminded him of Jesus. If you would be saved, Brother, you must look to Jesus who did hang upon the Cross. His wounds must save. The poor man heard and he believed. Almost immediately afterwards came in the superior, with the Brethren and the priests. And they began to grease him in extreme unction. This poor man tried to push them away. He could not bear the ceremony and as well as he could, he expressed his dissent. At last his lips were opened and he said in Latin, Tu vulnera Jesu!Your wounds, oh Jesus! Your wounds, oh Jesus! clasped his hands, lifted them to Heaven, fell back and died.

Oh, I would that many a Protestant would die with these words on his lips! There was the fullness of the Gospel in them. Your wounds, oh Jesus! Your wounds! These are my refuge in my trouble. Oh sinner, may you be helped to believe in His wounds! They cannot fail. Christs wounds must heal those that put their trust in Him.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #425 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! A PARADOX!   
NO. 425

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 15, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**They yet believed not for joy.   
Luke 24:41.**

THIS is a very strange sentence, but the Christian is a singularly complex being. He is a compound of the fallen and of the perfect. He detects in himself continually an alternation between the almost diabolical and the Divine. Man himself is a contradiction, but the Christian is that contradiction made more paradoxical. He cannot comprehend himself and only those who are like he can understand him. When he would do good he finds evil present with him. How to will he often finds, but how to perform he finds not. He is the greatest riddle in the universe. He can say with Ralph Erskine

*Im in my own and others eyes,   
A labyrinth of mysteries.*

In the case before us the disciples saw Christ manifestly before their eyes. To a certain extent they believed in His resurrection. That belief gave them joy and at once that very joy made them unbelieving. They looked againthey believed once more! Anon, a wave of joy rolled right over the head of their faith and then afresh their doubts returned. What palpitations, what heaving of the heart they had! It is too good to be true, they said. This is the summing up of the mental process which was going on withinIt is true, how blessed it is. It cannot be true because it is so blessed.

Tonight I shall endeavor to address that timid but hopeful tribe of persons who have heard of the greatness and preciousness of the salvation of Christ and have so far believed, that they have been filled with happiness on account of it, but that very enjoyment has made them doubt and they have exclaimedIt can not be. It is not possible. This exceeds all my expectations. It is, in fact, too good to be true. I remember to have been myself the subject of this temptation. Overjoyed to possess the treasure which I had found hidden in the field, delighted beyond all measure with the hope that I had an interest in Christ I feared that the gold might be counterfeitthe pearl a cheat, my hope a delusionmy confidence a dream.

Newly delivered from the thick darkness, the overwhelming brightness of grace threatened to blind my eyes. Laden with the new favors of a young spiritual life the excessive weight of the mercy staggered my early strength and I was for some time troubled with the thought that these things must be too great a good to be true. If God had been half as merciful or a tithe as kind as He was I could have believed it, but such exceeding riches of His grace were too much. Such out-doings of Himself in goodness, such giving exceeding abundantly above what one could ask or even think seemed too much to believe.

We will at once attempt to deal with this temptation. First of all, I will try to account for it. Secondly, to recount the reasons which forbid us long to indulge it. And then, thirdly, turn the very temptation itself into a reason why we should be more earnest in seeking these good things.

I. To begin, LET ME ACCOUNT FOR IT.   
It is little marvel that the spirit is amazed even to astonishment and doubt when you think of the greatness of the things themselves. The man black with sin saysMy iniquity is great. I deserve the wrath of God. The Gospel presents me with a pardon, full and complete. I have labored to wash out these stains but they will not disappear. The Gospel tells me that the precious blood of Jesus cleans from all sin. Year after year have I revolted and gone astray. The Gospel tells me that He is able to forgive all my sins and to cast my iniquities behind my back. Bowed down with a sense of the greatness of his guilt you may excuse the sinner if he thinks it must be impossible that ever the offenses he has committed could be condoned, or his iniquity could be put away.   
No, he says, a condemned sinner I am and the promise of a free pardon is too much for me to believe   
*Depths of mercy can there be,   
Pardon yet reserved for me?*  
No, more, says the poor soul, I am told that God is prepared to justify me. To give me a perfect righteousness. To look upon me as though I had always been a faithful servant. To regard me to all intents and purposes as though I had kept all His Laws without any offense and had obeyed all His statutes without any exception. According to the Scriptures I am to be robed about with the finished righteousness of Christ, clothed in that garment which He spent His life to work and I am in that garment to stand accepted in the Beloved.   
It is too good to be true, says the soul. It cannot be. I, the condemned one, accepted? I, who never kept Gods Law received as though I had kept it wholly? I, who have broken it, pressed to His bosom as though I were perfect in innocence? It does startle the soul and well it may. And when the Gospel goes on to addYes, and not only will I justify you but I will adopt you. You shall be no more a servant but a son, no more a bondslave but an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christthe mind cannot grasp the whole of that thought. Adopted! Received into His family! Alas, it cries, I am not worthy to be called Gods son.   
And as the sinner looks upon its former abject and lost estate and looks upward to the brightness of the inheritance which adoption secures to it, it saysIt is impossible, and like Sarah he laughs saying, How can this be? How can it be possible that I should attain to these things! And then the Gospel addsSoul, I will not only adopt you but having sanctified you entirelyyour whole spirit, soul and bodyI will crown you. I will bring you to the mansions of the blessed in the land of the happy. I will put a new song into your mouth and the palm of victory in your hand. The harp of triumph you shall play.   
Your soul will be deluged with delight and your spirit shall bathe itself in everlasting and unbroken peace. Heaven is yours though you deserve Hell. Gods glory yours though you deserve wrath. It is little marvel that these things, being so excessively great, the poor broken heart should be like the captives who returned from Babylon, who were like men that dream   
*When God restored our captive state,   
Joy was our song and grace our theme;   
The grace beyond our hopes so great,   
That joy appeared a painted dream.*   
Another reason for incredulity may be found in our sense of unworthiness. Note the person that receive these mercies and you will not wonder that he believes not for joy. Ah, says he, if these things were given to the righteous I could believe itbut to me, an old offenderto me, a hardhearted despiser of the overflowing love of God? To me who has looked on the slaughtered body of the Savior without a tear and viewed the precious blood of redemption without delight? To me, who has blasphemed, who has done despite to the Spirit of His grace and trod underfoot His Truth oh, says this poor heart, I could believe it for anyone. I could believe it for the whole world sooner than for myself!   
For you must know that the repenting sinner always has a deeper view of his own sin than of the sin of others and in this he differs from the impenitentwho have very keen eyes to see offenses in other menbut are blind to their own. He verily esteems himself the chief of sinners. He thinks that if anyone could have had the hottest place in Hell that must surely have been his proper portion. And it is so wonderful to him that he should be saved, that his spirit laughs with a kind of incredulity. What? I, the man who sat in the pot house and could sing a lascivious song?

Shall I sit at the right hand of God and be glorified with Christ? What? I, whose heart blasphemed its Creatorwhose soul has been a very den of thievescan I be accepted, washed and saved?

Brethren, when any of us look back upon our past lives we can find enough ground for astonishment if God has been pleased to choose us. Hence, I say, it is not a strange or a singular thing that the poor heart, from very excess of joy, should be unable to believe. Add to these the strange terms upon which God presents these thing to poor sinnersand the miracle of the manner equals the marvel of the matter. God comes to the sinner and He says not to him, Do penance. Pass through years of weariness. Renounce every pleasurebecome a monklive in the woods. Make yourself a hermittorture your bodycut yourself with knives. Starve yourself. Cover yourself with a shirt of hair, or wear a girdle of chain about your loins. No, if He did it would not appear as wonderful.

But He comes to the sinner and He says, Sinner, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. No works are asked of youno ceremonies does He demand but simply trust your soul with Christ. Oh, simple words! Oh, easy terms! They are not terms at all for these He gives usHis Spirit enables us to trust in Jesus. If He had demanded us do some great thing we should have been very willing to attempt it, but when it is simply, wash and be cleanOh, we say, that

simple thing? That easy plan? That scheme which is as well-fitted to the beggar as to the king? As suitable to the poor abandoned prostitute as to the most moral of the Pharisees? That scheme which adapts itself to the ignorant and the rude as well as to the learned and polite? Our spirit says, Ah, tis a joyous plan, and yet from very joy, it is unable to believe.

And add to this one more thoughtthe method by which God proposes to work all this. That is to say He proposes to pardon and to justify the sinner instantaneously. The plan of salvation requires not months nor weeks in which his sin may be put away. It is finished. An instant is enough to receive it and in that instant the man is saved. The moment a man believes in Christ, not some of his sins, but all his sins are forgiven. Just as when God blew with His wind the Egyptians were all drowned at once in the waters of the Red Sea and Moses said, You shall see them no more forever,

So, when once we believe in Christ the breath of Gods pardoning love blows upon the waters and our sins sink into the bottom like a stone. There is not one, not one of them left. It is as when a man takes a bond you are his debtor. He can imprison you, but he holds the bond over the candle flame and he says, See here! And when it is burned, your whole debt, though it were ten or twenty thousand pounds is gone in a moment! So does faithit sees the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us taken away and nailed to Christs Cross. Now this does seem a surprising thing. It is so surprising that when men have heard it for the first time they have been willing to run anywhere to listen to it again.

This was the secret of Whitfields popularity. The Gospel was a new thing in his age to the mass of the people. They were like blind men who, having had their eyes opened and being suddenly taken out at night to view the stars could not refrain from clapping their hands for joy! The first sight of land is always blessed to the sailors eyes. And the men of those days felt that they saw Heaven in the distance and the port of peace. It is no wonder that they rejoiced even to tears. It was glad tidings to their spirits and there were some then, as there are now who could not believe by reason of their excessive joy.

Possibly John Bunyan alludes to this singular unbelief in his sweet picture of Mercys dream wherein, like Sarai, she laughed. Let me tell it to you in his own wordsIn the morning, when they were awake, Christiana said to Mercy, What was the matter that you did laugh in your sleep tonight? I suppose you were in a dream. MERCYSo I was and a sweet dream it was; but are you sure I laughed? CHRISTIANAYes you laughed heartily; but please, Mercy, tell me your dream. MERCYI was dreaming that I sat all alone in a solitary place and was bemoaning of the hardness of my heart. Now I had not sat there long, but I thought many were gathered about me to see me and to hear what it was that I said. So they hearkened and I went on bemoaning the hardness of my heart.

At this, some of them laughed at me. Some called me fool and some began to thrust me about. With that, I thought I looked up and saw one coming with wings towards me. So he came directly to me and said, Mercy, what ails you? Now, when he had heard me make my complaint, he said, Peace be to you! He also wiped mine eyes with his handkerchief and clad me in silver and gold. He put a chain about my neck and earrings in my ears and a beautiful crown upon my head. Then he took me by the hand and said, Mercy, come after me! So he went up and I followed till we came to a golden gate. Then he knocked. And, when they within had opened, the man went in and I followed him up to a Throne, upon which One sat. And He said to me, Welcome, Daughter! The place looked bright and twinkling, like the stars, or rather like the sun. And I thought that I saw your husband there; so I awoke from my dream. But did I laugh?

Well might her mouth be filled with laughter to see herself so favored! II. Having thus tried to account for this state of the heart may I have the help of God while I try to DO BATTLE WITH THE EVIL THAT IS IN IT THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST!  
Troubled Heart, let me remind you, first of all that you have no need to doubt the Truth of the precious Revelation because of its greatnessfor He is a great God who makes it to you. Did you expect that He, the King of Heaven, rich in mercy and abundant in long-suffering, would send little grace, little love and little pity to the sons of men? What says the Scripture of Araunah the Jebusite?All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. But what shall we say of God? Shall He give like a king? Yes, He is King of kings and He gives as kings can never give. When Alexander bade his officer demand what reward he pleased, he asked so much that he nearly emptied the treasuryand when the treasurer refused to pay it and came to Alexander and said, This man is unreasonable. He asks too much. No, said the conqueror, he asks of Alexander and he measures what he asks by my dignity.   
So be it your remembrance that God will not give meanly and stingily, for that were unworthy of Him. But He will give splendidly and magnificently for this is after His own nature. Expect, therefore, that He will save great sinners in a great and glorious way and give them great mercies for the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods. The riches of His grace are inexhaustible. He is the Father of mercies and He begets mercies by thousands and by millions to supply his peoples needs.   
You meet a poor man and you are hungry. If he were hospitable he might say, Come in, Sir and you may have a part of my crust. You go in and you find a scanty meal upon the table and you say, What you have given me is all you had to give. I thank you for it. But what would you think if you waited at the royal door and received a royal invitation and, when you went in, were fed with dry crusts and drops of water? You would think this not becoming a king. Now if your friend has been offended and he is willing to forgive, you are grateful to himfor he does perhaps his bestbut God stands at His gate with His tables laden with a rich hospitality. My oxen and My fatlings are killed, all things are ready, come you to the supper. Let no low thought of God come in to make you doubt His power to save you. Have high thoughts of God and this snare of the fowler will be broken.   
Againlet me remind you that the greatness of Gods mercy should encourage you to believe that it comes from God. If I could take you suddenly, blindfold you and carry you away you knew not where and then, loosing the bandage from your eyes, should say, Look here. It is all gold on every side, thick slabs of gold and there is a pick-axetake it and use it. You begin and turn up blocks of orewould you have any idea at the time that this was put there by men? No, you say, this is Gods mine, the infinite bounty of the Creator. Not the scanty contrivance of nature. The abundance of the treasure proves to you that it cannot be the treasure house of man.   
Now, you open your eyes in this building tonight and you see a gas light. Well, you say, it is very gooda very good light in its way, but I can see it is mans light. Go out and see the moons lightdid you ever think that man made that? Or wait till tomorrow morning and look up at the sunwait till noonday when he is shedding down his brightness and gilding the fields with tints of glory and I think you will say, Ah, I shall never mistake this for mans work. It is so exceeding bright that nothing that man can ever achieve in the way of illumination can be at all comparable to it.   
Thus the greatness of the light makes you believe in the Divinity that ordained it. If you should see tomorrow a heavy shower of rain, you would not believe, I suppose, that it was made with a watering-pot. And if you saw the Thames swollen to its banks from a great flood, you would not believe that the London waterworks had filled it to its brim. No, you say, this is God at work in nature. The greatness of the work proves that God is here. If you were ever in Cambridge, you might have seen a little mountain which is so small that nobody knows who made it. Some say it is artificial. Some say it is natural. Now I have never heard any dispute about the Alpsnobody ever said that they were artificial.   
I never heard of any disputation about the Himalayasno one ever conjectured that human hands piled them up to the skies and clothed them with their hoary snows. So when I read of the mercies of God in Christ reaching up like mountains to HeavenI am sure they must be Divine. I am certain the Revelation must come from Godit must be true. It is selfevident. I might enlarge this argument by showing that Gods works in creation are very great and therefore it were idle to think that there would be no great works in grace. Two works which have been made by the same artist always have some characteristics which enable you to see that the same artist made them.   
In like manner, to us there is one God. Creation and redemption have but one Author. The same eternal power and Godhead are legibly inscribed on both. Now when I look at the sea and hear it roaring in the fullness thereof I see a great Artist there. And when my soul assays the ocean of grace and listens to the echoes of its motion as the sound of many waters, I see the same Almighty Artist. When I see a great sinner saved, then I think I see the same Master-hand which first formed man and curiously wrought his substance, endowing him with powers so great that they baffle our understanding. But if I only met with little specimens of grace, with narrow gifts and stumped benedictions, I might sayThese may be of man, for man can do many things and possibly as he has done little things in creation, he can do little things in grace. But when we meet with astounding conversions, with marvelous forgiveness, we are sure this must be God because it is so great and so far beyond all human comprehension.

Let me remind you again that you may get another argument to put an end to your fears about the greatness of Gods mercy from the greatness of His Providence. Did you ever think how much food God gives to His creatures every year? How much fine wheat He lays upon the earth that we may feed thereon! Have you remembered the vest machinery with which He feeds the thousand minions of men that are upon the face of the globe? When Xerxes led his millions from Persia to Greece there was a very great and cumbrous system to carry on the commissary so that all the host might be fed. And even as it were, many of them were starved.   
But here are millions upon minions and God feeds them. No, enlarge the thought. There are the fowls of Heaven that are countlessdid you ever pick up a dead sparrow that had been starved to death? I never did. Think of the sharp winters and the birds, somehow or other, without barn or granary, find their food. Look at the minions and million of fish in the sea, swimming tonight and searching for their food and your heavenly Father feeds all these. Look at the innumerable insects creeping upon the earth, or dancing in the summer sunbeamall supplied. Look at the behemoth who makes the deep to he hoary with roaring. Look at huge leviathan, the elephant, the crocodile and those other mighty creatures of Gods strength to go through the deep or through the forests. These He supplies in Providence.   
And if He is so lavish here, do you think that in the masterpiece of His handHis graceHe is stinted and narrowed? God forbid! Twere hard to believe in littleness of special love when we see greatness of common goodness towards the sons of man. Oh, says one, but I am thinking of my unworthiness and that this does not meet it. Well, this will meet it there is a country where there had been a drought and the land is all parched and chapped. That field of corn there belongs to a good man. That field over yonder belongs to an infidel. That one over there belongs to a blasphemer. That one is cultivated by a drunkard. That other one belongs to a man who lives in every known vice.   
Here comes a cloud! Blessed be God here comes a cloud which sails along through the sky. Where will it go? It is big with rain. It will make the poor dried-up germ revive. There will be a harvest yetwhich way will it go? Of course, you say, It will only go in the corner where the godly man has his field. No, not so. It spreads its rich mange over the entire sky and the shower of mercy falls upon the just and the unjust, upon the thankful and upon the unthankful. It falls just as plenteously where the blasphemer is the possessor as where the gracious man lifts up his heart in prayer. Now what does this show us? God blesses ungodly men, unthankful men!   
And I hold that as grace is always in analogy with nature, God is ready tonight to bless blasphemers, graceless men, careless men, drunken men, men who ask not His favor but who, nevertheless, if God wills to save them, shall certainly receive His salvation! He shall have His mercy brought into their souls and they shall live. To turn the point a moment and argue again. Soul, you say, I cannot believe, because the mercy is so great. Would anything but great mercy suit your case at all? Say, would little gains serve your case? Must you not say with Baxter, Lord, give me great mercy or no mercy, for nothing short of great mercy can answer my desire? You need a great Christ. You want One that can wash away foul offenses. He is just such an One as you need.   
Trust Him! Trust Him! Trust Him now! Besides, what have you to do with asking questions at all? What God gives you to do, is it not yours to do? He tells you, Trust My Son and I will save you through His blood. Sinner, ask no questions. Be it right or wrong, the responsibility will not rest with you if you will do as God bids you do. If the Spirit of God should now constrain you to trust Christ, should you perish, then you can say, I perished doing as God bade me. That can never be. You will be the first that ever did perish so. May God enable you at this very moment to take Him at His word and to trust your soul in Jesus hands!  
III. I close by USING YOUR VERY FEARS AS AN ENTICEMENT TO BELIEVE.   
If it is so joyous only to think of these things, what must it be to possess them? If it gives such a weight to your spirit only to think of being pardoned, adopted, accepted and savedwhat must it be really to be washed? You can not make a guess. But this I can tell youthe first moment I believed in Christ, I had more real happiness in one tick of the clock than in all the years before. Oh, to be forgiven! It is enough to make a man leap! Yes, to leap three times as John Bunyan puts it and go on his way rejoicing.   
Forgiven! Why, a rack becomes a bed of down! The flames become our friends when we are forgiven. Justified! No more condemnation! Oh, the joy of that! The happiness of the slave when he lands on freedoms shore is nothing compared with the delight of the believer when he gets out of the land of the enemy. Speak we of the joy of the poor captive who has been chained to the oar by the corsair and who at last is delivered? The breaking of his chain is not one-half such melodious music to him as the breaking of our chains to us.   
He took me out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a Rock and put a new song into my mouth and established my goings\_\_   
*I will praise You every day,   
Now Your angers passed away;   
Comfortable thoughts arise   
From the bleeding sacrifice.   
Jesus is become at length   
My salvation and my strength;   
And His praises shall prolong,   
While I live, my pleasant song.*   
Talk not of the joys of the dance, or of the flush of wine. Speak not of the mirth of the merry, or of the flashes of the ambitious and successful. There is a mirth more deep than these. A joy more intense. A bliss more enduring than anything the world can give.   
It is the bliss of being forgiven. The bliss of having Gods favor and Gods love in ones soul. The bliss of feeling that God is our Father. That Christ is married to our souls. And that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and will abide with us forever. Let the sweetness of the mercy draw you, poor soul! Let the sweetness of the mercy, I say, entice you! But you say, May I have it? Come and welcome, come and welcome, sinner, come! When you get outside of this place you will see opposite to the Elephant and Castle a fountain. If you are thirsty, go and drink. There is nobody there to say, You must not come. You are not fit. It is put there on purpose for the thirsty.   
And if tonight you want Christif you feel in your souls a desire to be partakers of His salvation, He stands there in the highway of the Gospel and He is free to every thirsty soul. No need to bring your silver cups or your golden vases. You may come with your poverty. No need, my poor Friend, that you should wait until you have learned to read well or have studied the classics. You may come in your ignorance just as you are. No need, my poor erring Brother, that you should wait till you should thoroughly reform. You may come and do your reformation afterwards. Come to Jesus as you are, just as you are! He will wash the filthy, clothe the naked, heal the sick, give sight to the blind, enrich the penniless and raise to glory those who seem to be sinking down to Hell!   
Oh, may God draw some tonight, some who have come in here out of curiosity to hear the strange preacher. Some who only hope to see the strange man seeking to win souls by telling them earnestly Gods simple Truth! May the Master lay hold of some tonight, yes, tonight! Had I the power to plead as Paul didcould I utter impassioned words like those of the seraphic WhitfieldO could I plead with you as a man pleads for his life, as a mother pleads for her childso would I say to you and beseech you that you be reconciled to God! My strength fails. The Truth has been uttered. Hear it! May you receive it!   
He that believes and is baptized shall be savedthus spoke our Lord and MasterHe that believes not shall be damned. Believe and make profession of your faith for whosoever with his heart believes and with his mouth makes confession, shall be saved. May the Lord bless the joy of the tidings to the rejoicing of our heart, for His dear names sake. Amen.

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JOY HINDERING FAITH   
NO. 2279

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, OCTOBER 23, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1890.

**And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have you here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.   
And He opened their understanding, that   
they might understand the Scriptures.   
Luke 24:41-45.**

THE disciples were gathered together with the doors of the house fast closed, for they were afraid of the Jewish mob. Suddenly HE came, HE who was chief in their thoughts, the Christ whom they had seen dead upon the Cross, whom some of them had helped to bury! There He stood before them and, they were terrified and frightened. As on a former occasion, on the Sea of Galilee, so now they said, It is a spirit, and they cried out for fear. The Savior did His best to correct their minds of their mistake. He said to them, Handle Me, and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. He went as far as He well could go to prove that He was a real Man, composed of real flesh and bones.

Then they believed, for it was perfectly clear that He had risen from the dead and was in their midst. They had hardly begun to believe that their Lord was really with them before it seemed too good to be true! A wave of joy came rolling up and then appeared to be sucked back, again, and they seemed to be sucked back by it. They

believed not for joythey were astoundedthey were full of wonder. They did believe, otherwise they would have had no joy, but the very joy swallowed up the thing of which it was born and they did not believe because of the excess of joy! This is an experience which has been very common and I merely take this text, tonight, that I may deal with some persons who have found Christ, and are saved, but who are now troubled because it seems too good to be true.

First, then, tonight, I shall speak, if I have the strength to do so, upon the difficulty under which they laboredThey yet believed not for joy. Secondly, I shall speak upon the manner in which our Lord helped them to get over the difficulty. He first ate a piece of fish and a portion of a honeycomb in their presenceand then opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

I. First, then, THE DIFFICULTY UNDER WHICH THEY LABORED. They believed not for joy.   
This is not the only instance in which joy has seemed to stop the flow of faith. It has occurred on other occasions. You have an early instance of it in the Book of Genesis. Will you kindly turn to Genesis 45:25, 26? Jacob had lost his beloved Joseph. He believed him to be dead. He had been shown a bloody coat which he knew was his sons. But now the brothers come back from Egypt with news that Joseph is yet alive and is governor over all the land of Egypt! And they went up out of Egypt and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacobs heart fainted, for he believed them not. It was too good to be true and his heart sank within him! You must be deceiving me, he said. He knew that his sons had been liars before. Indeed, if this report were true, they had been liars before, and now he cannot believe their newsit is too much for himand the old man swoons away. So have I met with many who had been told that Christ had saved them and they believed itbut after believing it, it seemed as if it was presumption to believe any such thing and they were thrown back into doubt and despondency.   
Job was once in a similar condition, for he says in his Book, (9:16)If I had called, and He had answered me; yet would I not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice. He had such a fear of God. He saw so much of his own unworthiness and of Gods greatness, that he says that if he had prayed, and God had heard him, he could not have believed it to be true! This is a more spiritual case than that of Jacob, but it makes a very good parallel instance as to the fact that joy, itself, may cause unbelief.   
The same idea comes up in Psalm 126. You remember the words, When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like they that dream. They seemed to say, We could not believe it! We thought it was all imagination, a freak of fancy, the high play of spirits in dreamland surely it cannot be true.   
If you need another case, you have that of Peter as recorded in the 12th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. When Peter had been brought out of prison, the angel led him into the street and he found that he was free, but he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. He could not believe that every barrier to his escape had been removed and that he was really out of prison! There is a young woman mentioned in the same chapter, who was very much of the same mind as Peter. Read the 13th and 14th versesAnd as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peters voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate. Why did she not let him in? Ah, she was too joyful to do that!   
As the woman at the well left her waterpot when she found Christ, so did Rhoda leave Peter standing outside the doorshe was too joyful to let him in! A hungry man, when he at last finds bread, may be too joyful to eat. A thirsty man may come to the fountain and, for a moment, be too joyful to stoop down and drink of its cooling stream. Men and women are strange paradoxes. We are made up of paradoxeswe are the most curious creatures in all the world! We believe and get joyful, and then we disbelieve because we are joyful, for we think that it cannot be true joy, or true faith! I do not understand you, my Brothers and Sisters, because I do not understand myself! And I do not believe that you understand yourselves, either! The mercy is that you do not need to understand yourselvesyou are in the hands of a Great Physician who knows all about you and who will prescribe for you when you cannot even tell what is the matter with yourself!   
I have given you these instances out of the Scriptures, but such cases are common enough in our experience. Here is one who has heard preached the doctrine of immediate salvation by faith. He understands that   
*The moment a sinner believes,   
And trusts in His crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives,   
Redemption in full through His blood.*   
He has believed and he has received! Redemption in full and now he says to himself, Can it really be true? What? All my sins forgiven? Am I whiter than snow? That great sin of mine that seemed to turn all my being to crimson and scarletis that washed out? It seems too good to be true and the mans doubts come thick upon him by reason of the very greatness of the pardon which he has grasped!   
Suppose, further, that it is whispered in his ear, You are redeemed from among men by a special redemption, for Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep and you are a part of His Churchyou are one of His sheep and, therefore, specially and peculiarly redeemed out of mankind. As he turns it over, he believes in a general redemption for all sinnersbut he cannot believe in this special, peculiar, effective Substitutionand he says to himself, It is too wonderful to be mine. For me to have a special part in what Christ did, how can that be? You first rejoice because you believe it and then you begin to doubt it because you rejoice! Perhaps it is whispered in your ear still further, You were chosen from before the foundation of the world! You are espoused to Christ, married to Him in an everlasting wedlock. You are a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. And because He lives, you shall also liveyou shall be with Him where He is and shall behold His Glory. You feel so full of delight that you can hardly bear yourselfbut you have scarcely begun to be delighted before the whisper comes, It is too good to be true. It must all be a mistake. And so you believe not for joy.   
Suppose that you should sometimes have those high enjoyments, those love feasts, those banquets in the Hall of Love with Christ? Suppose that you should come to lean your head, with holy John, upon His bosom and not only know His love, but be caught up, as it were, into the third Heaven of immediate fellowship with Him? Now you feel as if you could die for very joy, until there comes this cold, shivering doubt, You are altogether mistaken! You are a mere fanatic! You are an enthusiast, for God could not have admitted a man such as you, into such close fellowship. Often have I met with persons troubled in this mannerand it is to them that I speak.   
Now, let me ask, what is the occasion of this difficulty? Why do we get these doubts about the great mercy of God? I answer, first, because of a deep sense of unworthiness. If any man here could see himself as he is, and then could see the fullness of Gods love to him, I believe that it would make every individual hair of his head stand upright with astonishment and, next to that, it would carry him right away with a ravishment of adoring wonder. Such a wretch, such a beast, such an almost devil as I was and yet loved of God! It would startle him. Hear how David puts it, So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before You. Nevertheless, I am continually with You; You have held me by my right hand. The sense of our own unworthiness makes it seem too good to be true that we should really be saved.   
Next, the custom of fear in which some of us were found creates this difficulty. We were accustomed to think despairingly of our sin. Month after month some of us could see no hopeno, not a ray of lightso that when the Light of God did come, it was too much for our poor eyes. Have you never gone suddenly into the light and found yourself less able to see than you were when you were in the dark?

*When God revealed His gracious name   
And changed my mournful state,   
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,   
The Grace appeared so great,*

because of the mournful state in which I had been before.

Then, perhaps, most of all, it seems hard to believe because of the intensity of our former anxiety. These disciples had been intensely thoughtful about Christ and anxious about Himand that was why they could not, in a moment, believe that He was really risen from the dead. And when a man has been thinking long about his soul. When he has felt his sin like lead. When he has looked into the awful burnings of Infinite Justice. When he has heard, as it were, the sentence, Depart, you cursed, ringing in his ears, do you wonder that he needs to be quite sure that he is really forgiven? He cannot take that for granted. He looks, and looks, and looks, and looks againand he cannot rest till he is certain that his sin is all blotted out and that he is accepted in the Beloved. Hence, even the very delightfulness of the idea of being justified by faith in Christ causes a doubt to enter the heart.

Further, I do not wonder that the doubt comes in when you think of the simplicity of the way of salvation. Look! I have been for years trying to save myself. I have gone to Abana and Pharpar and washed, and washed, and washed, and I am still a leper. And then, one day, I do but believe, I do but go and wash in Jordan and at once my leprosy is gone! I should think that if the woman, whose issue of blood was staunched when she touched the hem of Christs garment and felt in her body that she was healed of that plague, she must also have had, a moment after, the fear, But surely it will come back again! I cannot have been cured in so simple a way! I have been to all the doctors and have spent all my money and only grew worse. Am I really healed? So, when a sinner sees himself saved by nothing but

believingby simply trusting Christdo you wonder that an early thought with him is, This must be too good to be trueto be saved so simply?

Add to this the immediateness of Divine Grace and you understand where the difficulty arises. If it took a month to save a man. If it took seven years to put sin away, I could understand that by degrees we should come to believe in the process, though I do not know but what we might very likely get fresh doubts out of that process! But to be saved in a momentto pass from death to life in less than the twinkling of an eye! To have all sin forgiven more quickly than a watch can tickthis is the work of salvation! This is the giving of the new birth, the passing of the act of indemnity and oblivionand this takes no time whatever!

*Tis done! The great transactions done;*

*I am my Lords, and He is mine.*   
And then the saved soul turns around and says, Can it be true that I am really savedI who was, just now, in the very depths of despair?

Now, I am only going to deal with this difficulty in the following few words to show you that it has no solid basis. You say, Can this be true? because it is so good. My answer isYou need something good, do you not? You need something greatly good! Could anything save you but a great act of Grace? Tell me. Are you not of Richard Baxters mind when he prayed, Lord, give me great mercy, or no mercy; for little mercy will not serve my purpose? If anybody says, It is too good to be true, say, It is no better than I need. I need perfect pardon! I need complete renewal! I need to be made a child of God. I need to be saved. It is not too good to be true, for it is not too good to be what you need!

Do you not think, also, that great things belong to God? Do you expect God to be little in His mercy, little in His gifts, little in His Grace? You make a great mistake if you do, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than mans ways. The greatness of the goodness which you receive should be to you a letter of commendation. If it were little, it might come from man. If it is too great to come from man, that proves that it comes from God! Let the greatness rather reassure you than cause you to doubt. When a doubt arises from the simple way of salvation, let me put this to youWhat other way would save you? I know that I shall never get to Heaven by any way but the way of faith. I have not even a fragment of confidence in anything that I have ever done, or ever designed to do

*Im a poor sinner, and nothing at all,   
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.*

O my dear Hearer, you may surely be content with a way that suits youthe way of believing! It is very easy, you say. It is not too easy for youyou could not go a harder way. To faint away into the arms of Christ and throw your whole weight upon Him, let it not seem too simple for you, for this is all that you can do. Yes, and more than you ever will do unless the Grace of God leads you to do it! Do not, therefore, doubt the way because it is so simple. What other way would you have?

Once more, do not say that the gift of Gods Grace is too good to be true, for those of us who live in the daily enjoyment of it are, by nature, no better than you and yet it has come to us! Why should it not come to you? I never saw the man yet whom I would have put behind myself in the matter of salvation. If I had had to guess which man in this congregation would not be saved, I would not have guessed any man but myself. I stood in the rear ranknot that I had openly sinned worse than others, but there were certain elements of character that caused me to despair. Yet I was fetched in by Gods Grace and why should not you, also, be brought in? Ah, you say, I am a very odd person. So am Iyou are not odder than I am! Oh! says one, but I am such a strange body. So am I. I am a lot out of all the catalogs. Whoever you are, be you who you may, come along to Christ! He cannot cast you away for He has said, Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out. Come to Christ, dear Friend, and He will not cast you out! This Truth of God is not too good to be true! If I have not found it too good to be true, you will not find it too good to be true. Lay hold of it and believe it.

Thus I have tried to set before you the difficulty that the disciples were in when they believed not for joy.   
II. Now, in the second place, I shall only be able to speak briefly upon THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR LORD HELPED THEM TO GET OVER THE DIFFICULTY.   
Of course, their main point was that they could not believe that Jesus was risen from the deadit seemed too good to be true.   
The Lord helped them out, first, by a fuller view of what He could do. They had handled Him. They had seen and felt that He was real substantial materialism, composed of flesh and blood, which spirits have not. He takes a piece of fish and eats it. He takes a piece of honeycomb, dripping with honey, and eats it and, as I think, He gave them a part of the same food. If they were not satisfied with looking at Him and handling Him, they would have a further evidence that He was in the body, for He could eat and drink like any other individual.   
Now, I pray the Lord to give to any here who say, It is too good to be true, a clearer view of Himself. If you will think more of Him who brings you this great salvation, you will not be less astonished, but you will be less doubtful. Think of who He was, God, in the bosom of the Father, and the Father, in giving Him, gave Himself! It is no trifling salvation, depend upon it, that God comes to work out. If it had been a small salvation, He might have sent Gabriel and said to him, Go and save those sinners. But as God Himself comes to do the work, you may depend upon it that it is a great salvation!   
And when our Lord came here, He not only lived and labored, but He suffered. He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was mocked, spit upon, scourged, crucified. He died. He who only has Immortality, died! Does that Cross over yonder mean a little salvation? Do the groans of Christ mean little gifts for men? Do those gory shoulders, plowed by the lash, mean trifles for trifling sinners? Do the five wounds and the cruel scorn, and the great passion all mean a small salvation for sinners? Oh, no, Beloved, they mean great salvation for giant sinners, the sons of Anak, a great salvation for the biggest sinners that ever lived! Think of the Cross of Calvary and Christ on it and you will never say that the great salvation He worked out is too good to be true!   
But He is alive, again, and He has gone up yonder, through the shining ranks of cherubim and seraphim, to the Throne of God. And what is He doing? Pleading for sinners, making intercession for the transgressors! Is that a little thing for which the Christ prays? He might have made one of His saints to be the intercessor if it had been some trifling thing, but it is a great, priceless, infinite blessing for which Christ prays before the Father!   
Listen, once more. Christ has joined the Glory of His name with the work of salvation. He cares more to be a Savior than to be a King! His highest Glory comes from His rescuing men from going down into the Pit. Creation glorifies God. The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy when the world was made, but God did not think that was a work to rejoice overHe merely said that it was good. He could have made 50 more worlds, yes, fifty million worlds, if He had pleased! But when Jesus saves men by laying down His life for His chosen, it is written, He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing. Think of Jehovah, the Triune God, bursting into song! He singsfor all His Glory is wrapped up in the salvation of men! Is it, then, a trifle? No! I rejoice in the greatness of salvation and believe in it all the more because it is so great and so worthy of the Glory of God! I hope that neither you nor I will fall into the difficulty of the disciples when they believed not for joy.   
But now our Savior did another thing. After thus manifesting Himself, He began to open up to them the Scriptures. Ah, that is what we all need for the removal of our doubts! The least read Book in the world, in proportion to its circulation, is the Bible. I believe that Jack the Giant Killer is more read than the Bible in proportion to the number of persons who have the books. It is sad that it should be so. There is the daily paper and there is the weekly religious paper, as it is called, and these two, together, put on the tablehide the Bible! We need to read our Bibles morewe must read our Bibles more! If we do, what shall we read there?   
Well, we shall read of a great Fall that took place in the Garden of Eden. You know, they tell us, now, that when Adam fell, he broke his little fingerand it was fixed upand he recovered. But that is not what the Bible says. He broke his neck and a great deal more than his neck! Oh, what a fall was there, my Brothers and Sisters! You and I and all of us fell down. It was a fall which dislocated man altogether. Well, now, for a great fall, you must have a great salvation. Therefore do not be astonished when you read of a great salvation! It is involved in the meaning of the great disaster of the Fall.   
Then, the Fall brought on great depravity. Although they make it out, now, that man, through the Fall, has only suffered very slightly, just a little toothache, or something of that sort, yet the Scripture does not tell us so. His whole head is sick and his whole heart faint, and from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head he is nothing but wounds, bruises and putrefying sores! The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Now you must have a great salvation to meet this great depravity! There must be a great work of Grace to turn this ship right-about, to lay a mighty hand upon the helm and reverse its course!   
Next, Beloved, if you read the Bible carefully, you will find that there is such a thing as great sin. Ah, you do not need to read your Bible for that! Reading your own heart, by the light of the Bible, and remembering that every evil thought as well as every evil word, yes, and every evil

imagination, is sin before God, you will see what a mass of sin one single human being is defiled with! You need a great salvation because of great sin!   
Further, if you read your Bibles, you will find that there is a great Hell. Everything in the Bible is according to scale. When men talk of a little Hell, it is because they think they have only a little sin and believe in a little Saviorit is all little together! But when you get a great sense of sin, you need a great Savior, and feel that if you do not have Him, you will fall into a great destruction and suffer a great punishment at the hands of the Great God! As you would escape a great Hell, believe in a great salvation and never be staggered because it is great.   
And then there is a great Heaven. Oh, what a Heaven! Have any of us any idea of what it will be like? We sit and meditate upon it. We sing about it and we sometimes half think that we are therebut we are not by a very long way. When we once get inside the gates, we shall say, with the

Queen of Sheba,  
The half was not told me.

*Then shall I see, and hear, and know   
All I desired or wished below!   
And every power find sweet employ   
In that eternal world of joy.*

To get you there, you must have a great salvation. Therefore, do not begin to say, It is too good to be true. Come, now, surely you are not going to be a fool and have the world and give up your hope of going to Heaven! I am often wonderstruck at the way in which God, in His infinite love, makes some men go the way that they never thought of going.

There are persons in this house, tonight, with whom I have conversed lately, children of ungodly parents, brought up in the midst of worldly amusements. Suddenly, softness fell upon their hearts and they began to think! The things that they loved, they began to loathe. They could not tell why. They sought the House of Prayer, they learned the way of salvation and laid hold on Christ. When they go home tonight, there is not one of the family that will welcome them, and they, themselves, strove hard to get away when God began to work upon their heart. But the harpooner in this pulpit, by Gods Grace, sent a harpoon in so deep that, whales as they were, they could never get it out! They dived deep into the sea of greater sinbut that harpoon held them. The next time that they came up to breathe, they got another harpoon, and they were, at last, wounded to such an extent that they had to yield! And now they are yielding, with the full concurrence of their will, to the Lord who has mastered them and led them captiveand now leads them in triumph! Glory be to God for this! You have to go to Heaven, my Friendyou are bound for Gloryand you will go there. There is a tug, just in front of you, that will draw you there, and you shall not be lost on the way. Why, if such is your grand destiny, do not wonder that, on the voyage, you have great things from God almost too great, at times, to be believed!

I have done when I have said one thing more. If even joy, sometimes, hinders our believing, do not let us think much about joy, or much about sorrow. The man who always thinks about being comfortable is generally the most uncomfortable being in the world! And the man who is always thinking about being happy goes the right way to work to be always unhappy! If we are to be saved by our feelings, we shall get saved and lost every other day, for we are just like the weather-glass. They said to me, yesterday, The glass is going back. Very likely it was, but it does not rain, for all that. Another day they say, The glass is going up, and then I find it generally does rain, so I give up the glasses and begin to wonder whether there is any truth in them at all!

Sometimes my feelings say to me, You are no child of God, and then I begin to pray, and so I know that my feelings have deceived me. Another time they say to me, Oh, you are a child of God, that is certain! And then I get as proud as Luciferand that a child of God should never be! What is the good of looking to your feelings at all? Walk by faith! Believe the Gospel! Cling to Gods promises! If they fail you, all is lost. But they cannot fail you! Rest in the finished work of Christ, but as for joys and sor

rows *Let them come, and let them go,   
Fickle as the winds that blow.*   
You need place no reliance upon them. Hold on to thisChrist died for   
the ungodly. He that believes in Him is justified from all things. He   
that believes in Him is not condemned. Hold you to that and then come   
what will, sink or swim, all will be well with your souls!   
The Lord bring us all to that blessed condition, for Jesus Christs sake!  
Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **LUKE 24:13-48.**

Verses 13-15. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus, Himself, drew near, and went with them. When two saints are talking together, Jesus is very likely to come and make the third one in the company! Talk of Him and you will soon talk with Him. I would that Believers more often spoke, the one to the other, about the things of God! It has been said that in the olden time, Gods people spoke often, one to another, but now we have altered that, and Gods people speak often one against another. It is an alteration, but it certainly is not an improvement. May we get together, again, and, like these two disciples, talk of all the things that happened in Jerusalem 18 centuries ago! If we have less of reasoning than they had, let us have more of communion.

16. But their eyes were restrained that they should not know Him. Christ was there, but they did not perceive Him. Our eyes may be very easily shut so that we do not see Christ even when He is close to us. We see a thousand things, but we miss the Master.

17. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that you have, one to another, as you walk, and are sad? Christian people, why are you sad? It should not be so! And when you talk, why do you increase each others sadness? Is that wisdom? Surely the Master might say to some here present, Why are you sad? I hope that He will enable you to shake off the sadness and to rejoice in Him.

18-20. And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto Him, Are you only a stranger in Jerusalem, and have not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. These were sad things to talk about. They thought that they had lost all when they had lost Christand yet there is no theme in all the world that is more full of joy than talk about the crucified Christ! This is strange, is it not? If we look beneath the surface, we shall see that the darkest deed that was ever perpetrated has turned out to be the greatest blessing to mankindand that the cruelest crime ever committed by mortal man has been made the channel of the greatest benediction of God!

21-23. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yes, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. How innocently they tell the story! How they convict themselves of stark unbelief! And the Master hears it all patiently and quietly. What a strange sensation it must have been for Him to hear them talking about Him in this amazing way when, all the while, they did not know who the stranger was to whom they were speaking! Have you ever thought of what the Savior must think of many things that we say? We think them wise, but they must be very foolish to the eyes of His infinite wisdom, and very shallow to Him who sees everything to the bottom.

24, 25. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not. He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. He loved them tenderly, but He rebuked them stronglyI had almost said sternlyO fools, and slow of heart! I am afraid that is our namefools. I am afraid that it may be said of us that we are slow of heart to believe. We need so many proofs. We very readily disbelieve, but we very slowly believe! If you had a piano in your house and you left it for monthsand when you came back, you found it all in beautiful tune, you would be sure that somebody must have been there to keep it in tune! But if, on the other hand, you left it to itself and it got out of tune, you would say that such a condition was only what was to be expected. So it is natural for us to get out of tune! Sometimes we ring out glad music on the high sounding cymbals and we lift up the loud hallelujahs of exultant joy! But soon we are down, again, in the deeps and strike a minor key. Grace, alone, can raise us! Nature, alas, sinks if left to itself!

26, 27. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His Glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. The best Book, with the best Teacher, descanting upon the best of Subjects! Everywhere this Book speaks about Christand when Christ explains it, He only brings Himself more clearly before our minds!

28. And they drew near unto the village, where they went. They were sorry to be nearing their destination. They would have liked to walk to the ends of the earth in such company and listening to such conversation!

28. And He made as though He would have gone further. Christ intended to go further unless the two disciples constrained Him to tarry with them.

29. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. That is our prayer to the Lord Jesus tonight, Abide with us, dear Master! We had Your blessed company this morning and now the sun is almost downabide with us! Let each one of us pray the prayer that we often sing, for, morning, noon, and night, this is a suitable supplication

*Abide with me from morn till eve,   
For without You I cannot live;   
Abide with me when night is nigh,   
For without You I dare not die.*

29-31. And He went in to stay with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, He took bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. In the breaking of bread, Christ is often known. It is a wonderful emblem. Even if this breaking of bread were not the observance of the Lords Supper, it was something very like it. Christs blessing and breaking of bread anywhere are the true token of Himself.

31-33. And He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem. It was getting late, but it is never too late to tell of Christs appearing, and never too early! Such a secret ought not to be kept an hour and, therefore, they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem.

33-36. And found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen, indeed, and has appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in the breaking of bread. And as they thus spoke, Jesus, Himself, stood in the midst of them. You see that, while they were talking about Christ, He came and stood in their midst! Speak of your Master and He will appear! Oh, happy people who have but to talk of Jesus, and lo, He comes to them!

37-40. But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 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. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. They knew those signs, the marks of His Crucifixion. They ought to have been convinced at once that it was even He.

41. And while they yet believed not for joy. Does joy stop faith? Beloved, anything stops faith if we will let it! Faith is a Divine miracle. Wherever it exists, God creates it and God sustains itbut without God, anything can hinder itwhile they yet believed not for joy.

41. And wondered, He said unto them, Have you here any meat? That is, anything eatable.   
42. And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish. Which, as fishermen, they were pretty sure always to have.   
42. And of an honeycomb. As a second course, to complete the meal.   
43. And He took it, and did eat before them. Some of the old versions add, and gave the rest to them, which I think is very likely to have been the case. It would be all the more convincing to them if He really ate before them, and then that they also partook of the same food of which He had taken part.   
44, 45. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. Good Master, do the same with us tonight!   
46, 47. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This Gospel message was to be proclaimed among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, but not ending there! It has been preached to uslet us see to it that we pass it on to those who have never heard it.   
48. And you are witnesses of these things. We also are called to be witnesses of these things. May the Lord make us to be faithful and true witnesses, for His names sake! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1729 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM   
NO. 1729

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 14, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47.**

The servants of God were not left to originate a Gospel for themselves, as certain modern teachers appear to do, nor were they even left to map out their mode of procedure in the spreading of the glad tidings. They were told by their great Master what to preach, where to preach it, how to preach it and even where to begin to preach it. There is ample room for the exercise of our thought in obeying Christs commands, but the worldly wise in these days call no one a thoughtful person who is content to be a docile follower of Jesus. They call themselves thoughtful and cultured simply because they set up their own thoughts in opposition to the thoughts of God. It were well if they would remember the old proverb Let another praise you and not your own lips.

As a rule, those who call themselves, intellectuals, are by no means persons of great intellect. Great minds seldom proclaim their own greatness! These boasters are not satisfied to be followers of God, as dear children, but must strike out a path for themselvesthis reveals their folly rather than their culture. We shall find use for every faculty which we possess, even if we are endowed with 10 talents, in doing just as we are bid to do by our Lord. Implicit obedience is not thoughtlesson the contrary, it is necessary to its completeness that heart and mind should be active in it.

I. You that would faithfully serve Christ note carefully how He taught His disciples WHAT THEY WERE TO PREACH. We find different descriptions of the subject of our preaching, but on this occasion it is comprised in two thingsrepentance and remission of sins. I am glad to find in this verse that old-fashioned virtue called repentance. It used to be preached, but is now out of fashion. Indeed, we are told that we always misunderstood the meaning of the word, repentanceit simply means a change of mind and nothing more. I wish that those who are so wise in their Greek knew a little more of that language, for then they would not be so ready with their infallible statements!

True, the word does signify a change of mind, but in its Scriptural connection it indicates a change of mind of an unusual character. It is not such a fitful thing as men mean when they speak of changing their minds, as some people do fifty times a day, but it is a change of mind of a deeper kind. Gospel repentance is a change of mind of the most radical sort such a change as never was worked in any man except by the Spirit of God. We mean to teach repentance, the old-fashioned repentance, too! And I do not know a better description of it than the childs verse

*Repentance is to leave   
The things we loved before,   
And show that we in earnest grieve   
By doing so no more.*

Let every man understand that he will never have remission of sin while he is in love with sinand that if he lives in sin he cannot obtain the pardon of sin. There must be a hatred of sin, a loathing of it and a turning from it, or it is not blotted out.

We are to preach repentance as a duty. The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commands all men everywhere to repent. Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. He that has sinned is bound to repent of having sinnedit is the least that he can do. How can any man ask God for mercy while he lives in his sin? We are to preach the acceptableness of repentance. In itself considered, there is nothing in repentance deserving of the favor of God. But, the Lord Jesus Christ having come, we read, He that confesses and forsakes his sin shall find mercy. God accepts repentance for the sake of His dear Son. He smiles upon the penitent sinner and puts away his iniquities. This we are to make known on all sides.

We are also to preach the motives of repentancethat men may not repent from mere fear of Hell, but they must repent of sin, itself. Every thief is sorry when he has to go to prisonevery murderer is sorry when the noose is about his neckthe sinner must repent, not because of the punishment of sinbut because his sin is sin against a pardoning God, sin against a bleeding Savior, sin against a holy Law, sin against a tender Gospel. The true penitent repents of sin against God and he would do so even if there were no punishment. When he is forgiven, he repents of sin more than ever, for he sees more clearly than ever the wickedness of offending so gracious a God.

We are to preach repentance in its perpetuity. Repentance is not a Grace which is only to be exercised by us for a week or so at the beginning of our Christian careerit is to attend us all the way to Heaven. Faith and repentance are to be inseparable companions throughout our pilgrimage to Heaven. Repenting of our sin and trusting in the great Sin Bearer is to be the tenor of our lives and we are to preach to men that it must be so. We are to tell them of the source of repentance, namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. Repentance is a plant that never grows on natures dunghillthe nature must be changed and repentance must be implanted by the Holy Spirit or it will never flourish in our hearts. We preach repentance as a fruit of the Spirit or else we greatly err.

Our second theme is to be remission of sins. What a blessed subject is this! To preach the full pardon of sinthat it is blotted out once and for all! To preach the free pardon of sin, that God forgives voluntarily of His own Gracefree forgiveness for the very chief of sinners for all their sins, however black they may beis not this a grand subject? We are to preach a final and irreversible remissionnot a pardon which is given and taken back againso that a man may have his sins forgiven and yet be punished for them.

I loathe such a Gospel as that and could not preach it! It would come with an ill grace from these lips. But the pardon of God once given stands forever! If He has cast our sins into the depths of the sea, they will never be washed up. If He has removed our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west, how can they return to condemn us? Once washed in the blood of the Lamb, we are clean! The deed is done! The one offering has put away, forever, all the guilt of Believers. Now this is what we are to preachfree, full, irreversible pardon for all that repent of sin and lay hold on Christ by faith. O servants of the Lord, be not ashamed to declare it, for this is your message!

II. Next to this, we are told WHERE IT IS TO BE PREACHED. The text says that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. Here, then, we have the Divine warrant for missions. They are no speculations, or enthusiastic dreamsthey are matters of Divine command. I daresay you have heard of what the Duke of Wellington said to a missionary in India who was questioning whether it was of any use to preach the Gospel to the Hindus. What are your marching orders? said this man of discipline and obedience. What are your marching orders? That is the deciding question! Now the marching orders are, Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. What a wonder it is that the Church did not see this long before! After her first days she seems to have fallen asleep and it is scarcely a 100 years ago since, in the Providence and Grace of God, the Church began to awaken to her high enterprise. We are to preach the Gospel everywheremissions are to be universal!

All nations need the preaching of the Word of God. The Gospel is a remedy for every human ill among all the races that live upon the face of the earth. Some out of all nations shall receive it, for there shall be gathered before the Eternal Throne men out of every kindred, nation and tongue. No nation will utterly refuse itthere will be found a remnant according to the Election of Grace even among the most perverse of the tribes of men! We ought to preach it to every creature, for it is written that it behooved Christ to be so. Read the 46th verseThus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. . . and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations.

Brothers and Sisters, there was a Divine necessity that Christ should dieand an equally imperative must that He should arise again from the dead! But there is an equally absolute necessity that Jesus should be preached to every creature under Heaven. It behooves Him to be so. Who, then, will linger? Let us, each one, according to his ability and opportunity, tell to all around us the story of the forgiveness of sin through the Mediators Sacrifice to as many as confess their sin and forsake it! We are bid to preach repentance of sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christlet us not be slow to do so.

III. But this is not all. We are actually told HOW TO PREACH IT. Repentance and remission are to be preached in Christs name. What does this mean? Ought we not to learn from this that we are to tell the Gospel to others because Christ orders us to do so? In Christs name we must do it! Silence is sin when salvation is the theme. If these should hold their peace, the stones would cry out against them. My Brothers, you must proclaim the Gospel according to your abilityit is not a thing which you may do or may not do at your own discretion. You must do it if you have any respect for your Saviors name. If you dare pray in that name; if you dare hope in that name; if you hear the music of joy in that namethen in the name of Jesus Christ preach the Gospel in every land!

But it means more than that. Not only preach it under His orders, but preach it on His authority. The true servant of Christ has His Master to back Him up! The Lord Jesus will seal by threats or by Grace, the Word of God preached by His faithful messengers. If we threaten the ungodly, the threat shall be fulfilled! If we announce Gods promise to the penitent, that promise shall be surely kept! The Lord Jesus will not let the words of His own ambassadors fall to the ground. Lo, I am with you always, He says, even to the end of the world. Go you, therefore and teach all nations. You have Christ with youteach the nations by His authority!

But does it not mean, also, that the repentance and the remission which are so bound together come to men by virtue of His name? Oh, Sinner, there would be no acceptance of your repentance if it were not for that dear name! Oh, guilty Conscience, there would be no ease for you through the remission of sin if it were not that the blessed name of Jesus is sweet to the Lord God of Hosts! We dare preach pardon to you in His name! The blood has been shed and sprinkled on the burning thronethe Christ has gone in within the veil and stands there, able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them. There is assuredly Salvation in His name and this is our glorybutthere is none other name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved.

That name has a fullness of saving efficacy and if you will but rest in it, you shall find salvation, and find it now! Thus you see we are not bid to go forth and sayWe preach you the Gospel in the name of our own reason. Or, we preach you the Gospel in the name of the Church to which we belong, or by the authority of a synod, or a bishop, or a creed, or a whole Church. No, we declare the Truth of God in the name of Christ! Christ has set His honor to guarantee the Truth of the Gospel. He will lose His glory if sinners that believe and repent are not saved! Dishonor will come to the Son of God if any man repenting of sin is not accepted before God!

For His names sake, He will not cast away one that comes to Him. O chief of sinners! He will receive you if you will come! He cannot reject youthat were to be false to His own promise, untrue to His own Nature! Be sure, then, that you preach in Christs name. If you preach in your own name, it is poor work. A man says to me, I cannot tell a dead sinner to live. I cannot tell a blind sinner to see. I cannot invite an insensible sinnerit is absurd, for the sinner is altogether without strength. No, dear Sir, I do not suppose you can do so while you speak according to carnal reason. Does the good man say that God has not sent him to bid the dead arise? Then let him not do it! Pray let him not try to do what God never sent him to do! Let him go home and go to bedhe will probably do as much good, asleep, as awake!

But as for me, I am sent to preach in Jesus name, Believe and live! And, therefore, I am not slow to do so. I am sent on purpose to say, You dry bones, live, and I dare not do otherwise! No faithful minister who knows what faith means looks to the sinner for power to believe, or looks to himself for powerhe looks to the Master that sent him for power! And in the name of Christ he says to the withered hand, Be stretched out! And he says to the dead, Come forth! And he does not speak in vain. Oh, yes, it is in Christs name that we fulfill our office! We are miracleworkers! He endows us with His power if in faith we proclaim His Gospel.

All of you who try to speak the Gospel may do it without fear of failure, for the power lies in the Gospel and in the Spirit who goes with itnot in the preacher or in the sinner. Blessed be the name of God, we have this treasure in earthen vessels but the excellency of the power is of God and not of us! So He tells us, then, what to preach, where to preach it and how to preach it.

IV. Now, I shall ask your attention to the principal topic of the present discourse and that is, that He told His disciples WHERE TO BEGIN. I have heard of a Puritan who had, in his sermon, 45 main divisions and about 10 subdivisions under every head. He might be said, largely, to divide the Word of Truth, even if he did not rightly divide it! Now, I have nine subheads, tonight, and yet I hope I shall not detain you beyond the usual time. I cannot make fewer of them and give the full meaning of this sentenceBeginning at Jerusalem. The Apostles were not to pick and choose where they should start, but they were to begin at Jerusalem.

Why? First, because it was written in the Scriptures that they were to begin at JerusalemThus it is written, and thus it behooves, that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. It was so written, but I will give you two or three proofs. Read in the second chapter of Isaiah, at the third verse Out of Zion shall come forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isaiahs words would have fallen to the ground if the preaching had not begun at Jerusalem! But now, to the very letter, this prediction of the evangelical Prophet is kept. In Joel, that famous Joel who prophesied the descent of the Spirit and the speaking of the servants and the handmaidens, we read in the second chapter, at the 32nd verse, In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance.

And again, in the 16th verse of the third chapter of the same Prophet The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem. As if the Lord were as a strong lion in the midst of Jerusalem! And as if the sounding forth of the Gospel was like the roaring of His voice, that the nations might hear and tremble! How could those promises have been kept if the Gospel had begun to be preached in the deserts of Arabia, or if the first Church of Christ had been set up at Damascus? Note another passage. Obadiah in his 21st verse says, Saviors shall come up on mount Zion. Who were these saviors but those who instrumentally became so by proclaiming the Savior, Jesus Christ? And Zechariah, who is full of visions, but not visionary, says in his 14

th chapter at the eighth verse, Living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem. And then he describes the course of those waters till they flowed even unto the Dead Sea and made its waters sweet.

Because the Bible said so, therefore they must begin at Jerusalem! And I call your attention to this, for our Lord Jesus was particular that every jot and tittle of the Old Testament should be fulfilled. Do you not think that this gives us a lesson that we should be very reverent towards every sentence of both the Old and the New Testaments? And if there is anything taught by our Lord, ought not His people to consider well and act according to the Divine ordinance? I am afraid that many take their religion from their parents, or from the Church that is nearest to them without weighing it. I counsel you to keep the Kings commandment.

Oh, that we may be more faithful servants of the Lord! If we are faithful, we shall be careful upon what men call small points, such as the Doctrine of Baptism, the manner of the Lords Supper, or this small point of where the Gospel should be first preached. It must begin at Jerusalem and nowhere else, for the Scripture cannot be broken. See you to it, then, that you walk according to the Word of God and that you test everything by it. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them. So much on the first head.

Secondly, I suppose that our Lord bade His disciples begin to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem because it was at Jerusalem that the facts which make up the Gospel had occurred. It was there that Jesus Christ died; that He was buried; that He rose again and that He ascended into Heaven. All these things happened at Jerusalem, or not far from it. Therefore the witness-bearing of the Apostles must be upon the spot where, if they lie, they can be confutedwhere persons can come forward and say, It was not so! You are deceivers. If our Lord had said, Do not say anything in Jerusalem. Go to Rome and begin preaching there, it would not have looked quite so straightforward as it now does when He says, Preach this before the scribes and the priests. They know that it is so. They have bribed the soldiers to say otherwise, but they know that I have risen.

The disciples were to preach the Gospel in the streets of Jerusalem. There were people in that city who were once lame, who leaped like a hart when Jesus healed them! There were men and women there who ate of the fish and that bread that Jesus multiplied. There were people in Jerusalem who had seen their children and their friends healed of dreadful diseases. Jesus bids His disciples beard the lion in his denand declare the Gospel on the spot where, if it had been untrue, it would have been contradicted with violence! Our Lord seemed to say, Point to the very place where My death took place. Tell them that they crucified Me; and see if they dare deny it. Bring it home to their consciences that they rejected the Christ of God.

Therefore it was, that coming to the very people who had seen these things, the preaching of Peter had unusual force about itin addition to the power of the Holy Spirit there was also thisthat he was telling them of a crime which they had newly committed and could not deny! And when they saw their error they turned to God with penitent hearts. I like this thoughtthat they were to begin at Jerusalem because there the events of the Gospel occurred. This is a direction for you, dear Friendif you have been newly converted, do not be ashamed to tell those who know you! A religion which will not stand the test of the fireside is not worth much! Oh, says one, I have never told my husband. I get out on a Thursday night, but he does not know where I am going and I sneak in here. I have never even told my children that I am a Believer. I do not like to let it be known. I am afraid that all my family would oppose me.

Oh, yesyou are going to Heaven round by the back lanes! Going to sneak into Glory as a rat crawls into a room through a hole in the floor! Do not attempt it! Never be ashamed of Christ! Come straight out and say to your friends, You know what I was, but now I have become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Begin at Jerusalemit was your Lords command! He had nothing to be ashamed of. There was no falsehood in what He bade His disciples preach and, therefore, He did as good as say, Hang up My Gospel to the light. It is nothing but the Truth of God, therefore display it before My enemies eyes. If yours is a true, genuine, thorough conversion, I do not say that you are to go up and down the street crying out that you are convertedbut on due occasions you must not hide your convictions. Conceal not what the Lord has done for you, but hold up your candle in your own house.

The third reason why the Lord Jesus told them to begin at Jerusalem may have been that He knew that there would come a time when some of His disciples would despise the Jews and, therefore, He saidWhen you preach My Gospel, begin with them. This is a standing commandment and everywhere we ought to preach the Gospel to the Jew as well as to the Gentile. Paul even says, to the Jew first. Some seem to think that there ought to be no mission to the Jewsthat there is no hope of converting themthat they are of no use when they are converted, and so on. I have even heard some who call themselves Christians speak slightingly of the Jewish people. What? And your Lord and Master a Jew? There is no race on earth so exalted as they are! They are the seed of Abraham, Gods Friend. We have nobles and dukes in England, but how far could they trace their pedigree? Why, up to a nobody!

But the poorest Jew on earth is descended linearly from Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. Instead of treating them with anything like disrespect, the Savior says, Begin at Jerusalem. Just as we say, Ladies first, so it is, the Jew first. They take precedence among races and are to be waited on first at the Gospel feast. Jesus would have us entertain a deep regard to that nation which God chose of old and out of which Christ came, for He is of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. He puts those first who knew Him first. Let us never sneer again at a Jew, for our Lord teaches us the rule of His house when He says, Begin at Jerusalem. Let the seed of Israel first have the Gospel presented to them and if they reject it we shall be clear of their blood. But we shall not be faithful to our orders unless we have taken note of Jews as well as Gentiles.

The fourth reason for beginning at Jerusalem is a practical lesson for you. Begin where you are tempted not to begin. Naturally these disciples would have said, one to another, when they met, We cannot do much here in Jerusalem. The first night that we met together the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. It is of no use for us to go out into the street; these people are all in such an excited frame of mind that they will not receive us! We had better go up to Damascus, or take a long journey and then commence preaching. And when this excitement is cooled down and they have forgotten about the Crucifixion, we will come and introduce Christ gradually and say as little as we can about putting Him to death.

That would have been the rule of policythat rule which often governs men who ought to be led by faith. But our Lord had said, Begin at Jerusalem, and so Peter must stand up in the midst of that motley throng and he must tell them, This Jesus whom you have, with wicked hands, crucified and slain is now risen from the dead. Instead of tearing Peter to pieces they come crowding up, crying, We believe in Jesus! Let us be baptized into His sacred name. The same day there were added to the Church 3,000 souls and a day or two afterwards, 5,000 were converted by the same kind of preaching! We ought always to try to do good where we think that it will not succeed! If we have a very strong aversion as a token that we are not called to it, we may regard it as a sign that we ought at least to try it.

The devil knows you, dear Friend, better than you know yourself. You see, he has been longer in the world than you have and he knows a great deal more about human nature than you do. And so he comes to you and he sizes you up pretty accurately and says, This man would be very useful in a certain sphere of labor, so I must keep him from it. So he tells the Brother that he is not called to it and that it is not the sort of thing for himand so onand then he says to himself, I have turned aside one foe from harming my cause. Yonder is a good Sister. Oh, how much she might do for Christ, but Satan guides her into a work in which she will never shine, while the holy work which she could do right well, she dreads.

I heard a beautiful story last Wednesday, when I was sitting to see inquirers, and I cannot help mentioning it here, for it may be a suggestion to some Christian who is present. A Brother, who will be received into the Church, was converted in the following way. He came up to London and worked in a certain parish in the West End. He was at work on a sewer and a lady from one of the best houses in the West End came to the men that were making the sewer and said, You men, come into my servants hall and eat your dinners. I will give you either tea or coffee with your meal and then you will not have to go into the public house. Some of them went in, but others did not. So the next day the lady came out, and said, Now, I know that you think my place too fine for you. You do not like to come. So I have come out to fetch you in. While this sewer is being done I should like you to eat your dinners in my house.

She got them all in and when they had done their dinners and drank their tea or coffee she began to talk to them about Jesus Christ. The work was a month or so about and it was every day the same. Our friend does not know the ladys name, but he knows the name of Jesus through her teaching. Friends, we lose hosts of opportunities, I am sure we do! Many ways of doing good have never occurred to our minds, but they ought to and when they

do occur we should use them! Let us crucify the flesh about this. Let us overcome natural timidity. Let us, in some way or other, begin at Jerusalem, which is just where we thought that we never could begin.

Now fifthly. We are getting on, you see. Beginning at Jerusalem, must surely mean begin at home. Jerusalem was the capital city of their own country. You know the old proverb, The cobblers wife goes barefoot. I am afraid that this proverb is verified by some Christians. They do a deal of good five miles from home, but none at home. I knew a man who used to go out with preachers every night in the week and try to preach, himself, poor soul that he was. But his children were so neglected that they were the most wicked children in the streetand they grew up in all manner of vice. The father was prancing about and looking after other peopleand did not care for his own family! Now, if you are going to serve Christ to the very ends of the earth, take care that you begin at home!

Dear parents, need I urge you to look to your own children? It is a great joy to me to know that the members of this Church, for the most part, do this. When a dear Sister came to me on Wednesday night with three of her children, making four that had come within the last six weeks, I felt grateful to God that parents were looking after their offspring. But if any of you are in the Sunday school and never have a Sunday school at homeif any of you talk to strangers in the aisles, but are neglecting your own sons and daughtersoh, let it not be so! The power of a fathers prayers, with his arms about his boys neck, I know full well! The power of a mothers prayers, with her children all kneeling round her, is far greater with the young than any public ministry will be. Look well to your children!

Begin at Jerusalem. Begin with your servants. Do not let a servant live in your house in ignorance of the Gospel. Do not have family prayer merely as a matter of form, but let it be a reality! Do not have one person working for you to whom you have never spoken about his or her soul. Begin with your brothers! Oh, the influence of sisters over brothers! I have a frienda dear friend, toowho has long been a man of God, but in his young days he was a very loose fellow. Often he was all the night away from home. His sister used to write letters to him and frequently, while half tipsy, he read them under street lamps. One letter which he read cut him to the quick. His sisters grief about him was too much for him and he was compelled to seek and find the Savior. Well has the sister been rewarded for all her love to him!

Oh, dear Friends, begin at Jerusalem! Begin with your brothers and sisters! Begin with your neighbors! Oh, this London of ours! It is a horrible place for Christian people to live in! Round about this neighborhood scarcely can a decent person remain by reason of the vice that abounds and the language that is heard on every side. Many of you are as much vexed today as Lot was when he was in Sodom. Well, bear your witness! Do not be dumb dogs, but speak up for your Lord and Master wherever you are! Look at our dear Brother, Lazenby, who entered a workshop where none feared the Lord and has been the means of bringing all in the shop to God! Another shop has felt his influence and the first recruit has come to join the ChurchI should not wonder if the whole of the workmen in the second shop should come, too! The Lord grant it. It is marvelous how the Gospel spreads when men are in earnest and their lives are right. God make you to live so that you show piety at home!

Then, sixthly, begin where much has already been done. Begin at Jerusalem. It is hard work, dear Friends, to preach to certain peoplethey have been preached to so long, like the people at Jerusalem. They know all about the Gospel! It is hard to tell them anything fresh and yet they have felt nothing, but remain wed to their sins. The Jerusalem people had been taught in vain for centuries! And yet Christs disciples were to speak to them first. We must not pass the Gospel-hardenedwe must labor for the conversion of those who have enjoyed privileges but have neglected themthose who have had impressions and have crushed them out! We must not ignore those who seem as if they had sealed their own death warrants and will never be saved.

Do not hesitate to go to them! The Lord has already done muchit may be that He has laid the fire and you are to strike the match and set it all alight. Many people have a love to the Gospel, a love to the House of God, a love to Gods people and yet they have no saving faith. What a pity! Do not hesitate to address them. I think I hear you say, I would rather go and preach to the outcasts. So would I, but you and I are not allowed to pick our work. Virgin soil yields the best harvest and if a man might choose a congregation that is likely to be fruitful, he might well select those that have never heard the Word of God. But we have no choice. The Saviors disciples were to begin where the Prophets had prophesied and had been put to deathwhere sinners had rejected Gods voice times out of mind! Therefore do not pass by your fellow seat holders.

Perhaps you say, Sir, I have spoken to them a great many times, but I cannot make anything of them. No, you cannot, but God can! Try again. Suppose that for 20 years you were to sit in this Tabernacle side by side with an unconverted person and you were to speak to that person twice every Sunday and twice in the weekand all the 20 years it should be in vain? Yet if, at last, the individual were brought to Christ, would not his conversion repay you? Is your time so very precious? Is your ability so very great? Oh, my dear Friend, if you were an archangel, it would be worth while for you to work a thousand years to bring one soul to Christ! A soul is such a precious jewel that you would be abundantly rewarded if a century of service only brought you one conversion! Why, in working for Christ, do not hesitate to go to those who have refused the Gospel up to now, for you may yet prevail.

Seventh, begin where the Gospel day is short. If you ask me where I get that thought, it is from the fact that within a very short time Jerusalem was to be destroyed. The Romans were to come there to slay men, women and children! They were to break down the walls and leave not one stone upon another. And Christs disciples knew thisthat is why their Lord said, Begin at Jerusalem. Now, then, if you have any choice as to the person you shall speak to, select an old man. He is near his journeys end and if he is unsaved, there is but a little bit of candle left by the light of which he may come to Christ. Choose the old man and do not let him remain ignorant of the Gospel. Fish him up at once, for with him it is now or never, since he is on the borders of the grave.

Or when any of you notice a girl upon whose cheek you see that hectic flush which marks consumptionif you notice during service the deep churchyard coughsay to yourself, I will not let you go without speaking to you, for you may soon be dead. How many a time have I seen a consumptive at Mentone apparently getting betterbut I have noticed him rise from dinner with his handkerchief to his mouth and soon they have whispered, He died of hemorrhagesuddenly taken off. When you meet with a pining case, do not wait to be introduced, but introduce yourself. And tenderly, gently, quietly, lovingly say a word about coming to Christ at once. We ought to speedily look up those whose day of Grace is short. Perhaps, also, there is a stranger near you who is going far away to a distant land and may never hear the Gospel again. Therefore, if you have an opportunity, take care that you avail yourself of it and reason with him for Jesus at once. Begin at Jerusalembegin where the day of Grace is short.

Eighthly, begin, dear Friend, where you may expect opposition. That is a strange thing, perhaps, to advise, but I recommend it because the Savior advised it. It was as certain as that two times two is four that if they preached Christ in Jerusalem, there would be a noise, for there were persons living there who hated the very name of Jesusthey had conspired to put Him to death! If they began at Jerusalem, they would awaken a ferocious opposition. But nothing is much better for the Gospel than opposition! A man comes into the Tabernacle tonight and, as he goes away, he says, Yes, I was pleased and satisfied. In that mans case I have failed! But another man keeps biting his tongue, for he cannot endure the preaching. He is very angrysomething in the doctrine does not suit him and he cries, As long as I live I will never come here again. That man is hopeful! He begins to think!

The hook has taken hold of him. Give us time and we will have that fish! It is no ill omen when a man gets angry with the Gospel. It is bad enough, but it is infinitely better than that horrible lethargy into which men fall when they do not think. Some are not good enough, even, to oppose the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Be hopeful of the man who will not let you speak to himhe is one that you must approach again. And if he does let you speak to him and he seems as if he would spit on you, be grateful for it! He feels your words. You are touching him on a sore place. You will have him yet! When he swears that he does not believe a word of what you say, do not believe a word of what he saysfor often the man who openly objects, secretly believes. Just as boys whistle when they go through a churchyard in order to keep their courage up, so many a blasphemer is profane in order to silence his conscience. When he feels the hook, like the fish, the man will dart away from it. Give him line. Let him go. The hook will hold and, in due time, you will have him, by Gods Grace. Do not despair! Do not think it a horrible thing that he should oppose youyou should rather be grateful for it and go to God and cry that He will give you that soul for your hire! Begin courageously where you may expect opposition.

And, lastly, to come to the meaning which Mr. John Bunyan has put upon the text in his famous book called, The Jerusalem Sinner Saved, I have no doubt that the Savior bade them begin at Jerusalem because the biggest sinners lived there. There they lived who had crucified Him! The loving Jesus bids them preach repentance and remission to them. There he lived who had pierced the Saviors side and they that had plaited the crown of thorns and put it on His head! There dwell those who had mocked Him and spat upon Himand, therefore, the loving Jesus, who so freely forgives, says, Go and preach the Gospel to them first. The greatest sinners are the objects of the greatest mercy! Preach first to them.

Are there any such here? My dear Friend, we must first preach the Gospel to you because you need it the most. You are dying! Your wounds are bleeding! The heavenly Surgeon bids us staunch your wounds first. Others who are not so badly hurt may wait awhile, but you must be first served lest you die of your injuries. Should not this encourage you great sinners to come to Jesus when He bids us preach to you first? We are to preach to you first because when you have received Him, you will praise Him the most! If you are saved, you will encourage others to come and you will cheer up those who have already come! We shall be glad to get fresh blood poured into the veins of the Church by the conversion of big sinners who love much because they have had been much forgiven and, therefore, we are to come to you first. Will you not come to Christ at once? Oh, that you would believe in Him! Oh that you would believe in Him tonight! To you is the word of this salvation sent!

You old sinnersyou that have added sin to sin and done all you can do with both hands wickedlyyou that have cursed His nameyou that have robbed othersyou that have told liesyou that have blackened yourselves with every crime, come and welcome to Jesus! Come to Christ and live at once! Mercys door is set wide open on purpose that the vilest of the vile may comeand they are called to come first! Just as you are, come along with you. Tarry not to cleanse or mend, but, now, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. This night if you believe in Jesus you shall go out of these doors rejoicing that the Lord has put away your sin! To believe is to trustsimply trust in Christ. It seems a very simple thing, but that is why it is so difficult. If it were a hard thing, you would more readily attend to itbut being so easy, you cannot believe that it is effectual. But it is! Faith saves! Christ needs nothing of you but that you accept what He freely presents to you! Put out an empty hand, a black hand, a trembling handaccept what Jesus givesand salvation is yours!

Thus have I tried to expound, Beginning at Jerusalem, O that my Lord would begin with you! Amen.   
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONMATTHEW 28.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK486, 537. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3224 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REPENTANCE AND REMISSION   
NO. 3224

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1910.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, APRIL 17, 1870.

**And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.   
Luke 24:47.**

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #1729, Volume 29 BEGINNING AT JERUSALEMRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THIS verse is among our Lords last words to His disciples just before He left them to return to Heaven. He wished to impress upon them the Truth of God that it was His purpose and desire that their lives should be devoted to the preaching of His Gospel among all nations upon the face of the earth. In Christs own words and throughout the New Testament, we find the greatest stress laid upon preaching. Preaching is the great battering ram that is to shake the gates of Hell! Preaching is Gods chief method of winning souls unto Himselffor after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. We cannot too often remind this age in which we live of this Truth, for this is a time in which it is supposed that rites and ceremonies, human learning and literature and I know not what else, may very properly be allowed to supplant the preaching of the Word! Yet our Lord has given no intimation of any change in His purpose and planon the contrary, His great commission is evidently intended to cover the whole of this present dispensationGo you, therefore, and teach (that is, make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them (that is, those who have been made disciples) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (or, more properly, unto the end of the age). Amen. So, until this dispensation is brought to a close by the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in His name among all nations. Blessed, indeed, are those who, in this land or anywhere else, have heard their Lord and Master say to them as He said to His disciples before He left them, and you are witnesses of these things.

As I have been called, by His Grace, to be one of His witnesses, I will now try to put the text to practical use by preaching, first, upon the subject, and secondly, upon the audience here mentioned by our Lord.

I. First, let us consider THE SUBJECT OF OUR PREACHING as here stated by our Lordthat repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name.

So the first part of the subject is that repentance should he preached in the name of Jesus. There is a very important point that must here be notedand that is that repentance is not to be preached in the name of Moses as a legal duty. Undoubtedly, it is a legal duty, for everyone who sins against God ought to repent of doing so. Whenever we have broken any Law of God, we ought to be sorry for having broken it. It is the natural, commonsense duty of the creature, when he has disobeyed any command of his Creator, to grieve that he has thus grossly offended his Maker and to resolve that if possible, he will not do so any more. But it is not in this fashion, simply as a legal duty, that Christ has bid His servants preach repentance. If we preach it thus, our labor will be in vain at least to a very large extent!

Nor are we to preach it merely as a matter of faint hope . There is, indeed, more than a faint hope for any man who is bid to repent because he will suppose, naturally and properly, that the God who bids him repent must have some designs of love towards him. But we are not to preach to sinners in such a fashion as simply to make them faintly hope that they may be saved. You know that when Jonah passed through the streets of Nineveh, his mournful and monotonous message was, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown. When that message was carried to the king, he laid aside his gorgeous robe and put on sackcloth, sat in ashes, proclaimed a fast for man and beast and commanded his people to turn from their evil ways! Yet he had no better hope than this Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not? When they repented, God did have mercy upon them and spared them. But we have to carry to sinners a far more hopeful message than that heathen kings enquiry, Who can tell if God will turn and repent? Our Lord Jesus Christ has ordained that repentance should be preached in quite a different fashion than that!

We are not even to preach it after the manner of John the Baptist who preached repentance as a preparation for the coming of Christ. His message was, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. To the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, he said, Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance, evidences of a change of life, because there was One far mightier than he coming after himwhose shoes he was not worthy to bear. John was only sent to prepare the way for Him who should baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. There are some, nowadays, who seem to think that repentance is a sort of preparation for faith in Christ, but that is not as we understand the Word of Godas we will try to show you before we have finished our discourse. We have not to preach repentance after the manner or in the nature of Moses, or Jonah, or John the Baptistwe have to preach repentance in the name of Jesus Christ! What does this mean?

First, it means that we are to preach repentance as the gift of God. Christ was exalted with His Fathers right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance as well as forgiveness of sins. Wherever there is real sorrow for sin, wherever there is an honest determination, by Gods Grace, to cease from sin, wherever there is a complete change of mind with regard to sinfor that is what repentance meansthat repentance has been produced by the Spirit of God and it is as much a gift of the Covenant of Grace as even the pardon which comes with it is! This is the repentance which we are to preach in Christs name, and of which Joseph Hart so sweetly sings

*Come, you needy, come and welcome,   
Gods free bounty glorify!   
True belief and true repentance,   
Every Grace that brings us near,   
Without money,   
Come to Jesus Christ and buy!*

You are not to seek to draw up repentance from the depths of your own heart, as you might draw up water from a well, but to ask Christ to work repentance in you by His Holy Spirit, through belief of the Truth of God as it is recorded in the Word of God, or as it is set before you in the preaching of the Gospel. As you learn how terribly Christ suffered because of sin, that Truth will, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, be the means of leading you to hate sin. And you will realize how the Holy Spirit, by enlightening the understanding and influencing the affections, produces repentance even in that sterile heart which had never been previously softened and made fertile by the gentle dew and rain of Grace. So we are to tell sinners that God gives repentancethat it is one of the free gifts of His Graceand that whoever has it may rest assured that the hand of the Lord has been upon him for good and that, in fact, the work of salvation has been already begun in his soul!

Further, to preach repentance in the name of Jesus also means that wherever there is real repentance, it is the token of the pardon of sinnot merely a hopeful sign, but the sure and Infallible sign of pardon. If any mans heart is turned away from sin. If he prostrates himself in the dust before God because of his offenses. If he looks with true penitence to Christ upon the Cross, crying, Lord, remember me, Lord, save me, God be merciful to me, a sinnerit is not a question whether forgiveness may or may not be granted to himit is a fact that he is already forgiven! Davids words are still true, The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as are of a contrite spirit. It was for such as these that Jesus suffered upon Calvary. So let the message ring out through every land beneath the canopy of Heaven, that wherever there is a soul that loathes sin and leaves sin, Eternal Mercy has already commenced its gracious work and that soul is forgiven!

I also think that to preach repentance in the name of Jesus means that we are to preach it on the authority of Jesus. We are not merely to bid men repent and to try to persuade them to do so by various reasons that might be urged! We are to take far higher ground than that, as Paul did at Athens when he said, The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent. The servants of Christ are not to preach repentance on their own authority, or even on the authority of the Church of Christ, but they are to preach it on the authority of the Churchs ascended Head! This was Christs own message, for we read, After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent you, and believe the Gospel. So no true minister of Christ need be either afraid or ashamed to tell sinnerseven the very worst sinnersthat they should repent! When Jesus went into the country of the Gadarenes, a man possessed by an unclean spirit met Hima wild man whom no mere human being could tame, a man who snapped the fetters and chains with which he was bound, a man who lived in the mountains, or among the tombs, a man who was a terror to the whole countryside and from whom all who could, fleddid Jesus flee from him or pass him by as too bad to be cured? No, the fiat of Omnipotence was, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit. And though it was not merely one demon, but a whole legion of evil spirits that possessed the man, they all departed at Christs command! And the man, himself, was shortly afterwards found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. And soon he, too, was taken into Christs service, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel. In like manner, the true minister of Christ is not only to call upon the most moral and the most hopeful to repent, but he is to give the same message to the most immoral and the most hopeless! On the day of the Pentecost, when Peter had charged his hearers with putting Jesus to death, they were pricked in their heart and said to the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. You know what followedabout three thousand of them gladly received Peters words, were baptized and the same day were added to the Church! Our commission to preach the Gospel to every creature was issued by Him to whom all power in Heaven and in earth had been given! It is, therefore, under Divine authority that repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in Christs name among all nations! Repentance and remission are so joined together that wherever we find the one, we are sure to find the other. Where there is no repentance, there can be no remission. But where there is true repentancethat godly sorrow for sin that needs not to be repented of there is the full and free forgiveness of all sins of the one who has thus sincerely repented!

According to our text, this remission of sins is to be preached in the name of Jesus. We have the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ for declaring that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. And when Paul was preaching at Antioch concerning the Resurrection of Christ, he put this Truth of God very plainlyBe it known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. We also are to preach, not as unauthorized persons who hope that what we say may possibly prove to be true, but as those who are proclaiming Divine Truths and certainties on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! As one of the Lords witnesses, let me tell you, my dear Hearers, that there is promised to penitents a full pardon of every sin they have ever committed, whether it has been a sin of thought, or word, or deed whether it has been a sin of omission or of commission! This pardon makes a clean sweep of the accumulated heaps of defilement that have resulted from years of iniquity! It is a pardon as great as it is fullpardon for the most horrible and oft-repeated offenses, pardon for uncleanness, for theft, for blasphemy, even for murder if the murderer has truly repented! It is a

*Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,*

*A pardon bought with Jesus blood.*   
The blood of Jesus Christ, Gods Son, cleanses from all sin, all who truly repent and believe in Him! It cleanses from the sins that banish men from the presence of their fellows, and from the sins that would banish them forever from the Presence of the thrice-holy God! Yes, pardon is to be proclaimed in the name of Jesus for sins such as thesethey are not too black to be forgiven by Godthey are not too deeply ingrained to be washed out by the precious blood of Jesus!

And this great and full pardon is also a pardon that is given instantaneously. In a moment the guilt of the penitent sinner is forgiven! To quote Hart, again, His pardon at once he receives. The instant that faith is begotten in the soul, we are justified in the sight of God and we can say with the Apostle Paul, Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifies. The believing penitent turns his weeping eyes to Christ upon the Cross, gazes with mingled sorrow and joy upon the blood that flowed from His many wounds, places all his reliance upon the God-appointed Propitiation, the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world, and in that very moment all his iniquities are gone forever! The Lord has blotted them out and driven them away like clouds that have been dispersed by a tornado, and that can never be found again!

This pardon is realized by the penitent sinner who receives it . The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Oftentimes, the sense of pardon comes upon a man like a piece of good news that makes him almost leap for joyhe was never before thrilled with so wondrous an emotion! He is half inclined to sing

*He has lifted me out of the miry clay,*

*And set my feet on the Kings Highway*   
but, perhaps, instead of doing so, he bows himself before the Lord in solemn silence, feeling that he could never express the gratitude he feels for such amazing mercy. Or, possibly, he finds Davids words just suited to his experience and, therefore, he says, Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all His benefits who forgives all your iniquities. He realizes, as David did, that all his iniquities are forgiven and with the royal Psalmist he sings, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Nor is this all, for this pardon is one that is never reversed. O Sinner, if you really repent of your sin and believe in Jesus, the sinners Savior, you are saved with an everlasting salvation! Remember that you have to deal with a God who never changesHe gives to the guilty penitent full and free forgiveness, not a reprieve or a respite! Once washed in the precious blood of Jesus, you shall never go back to your sin so as to live in it, and to die in it and perish. If you are truly trusting in Jesus, you are saved, not merely for today, tomorrow and next week, but forever. What says the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? 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 pluck them out of My hand. Were you, my dear Hearer, ever pardoned by God for Christs sake? Then you are pardoned forever! But if not, I pray that you may repent and believe the Gospel this very hour.

Perhaps you say, But all this seems so strange to me. You tell me that my sins can all be forgiven in a moment, and forgiven foreverand that I have nothing to pay for this priceless blessing, but am simply bid to repent of my sin and believe in Jesus. Yes, that is all true. But I do not ask you to believe it because I say it, for I only repeat to you the message that I have received from the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, through His Word and by His Spirit. He cannot lieand it is He who says, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. He has given the best proof possible that your sins can be forgiven in the fact that He died in the place of sinners. Jesus Christ, who was God as well as Man, suffered as the Substitute of all who believe in Him. He bore their sins in His own body up to the tree and away from the tree! And now, for all who truly trust Him, there is no condemnation forever!

But, says one, I do not doubt that repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in Christs name. My difficulty is as to whether they are for me! Well, that is a point that you must settle under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Have you really repented of your sin? Have you sorrowed over it as the great curse of your life? Have you hated it and turned away from it, and sought to live as the holy God would have you live? Well, then, if the repentance is yours, the remission, also, is yours for they go together in Christs own wordsrepentance and remission of sins. To hate sin because it slew Christ. To hate sin because God is so good that we ought not to sin against Him. To hate sin because God is so gracious as to forgive it. To weep over sin, not like a child who has done wrong, and so keeps away from his father, but like a penitent child who lays his head in his fathers bosom and sobs out his grief there, and mourns that he has offended such a loving father who is so ready to forgive himthis is evangelical repentance and wherever it is found, there is also the remission of sins! If you do not know experimentally what it is thus to repent, breathe the prayer, O Lord, show me the guilt of my sin. Teach me to mourn over it, to loath it and leave it. Let me see Your dear Son bearing its penalty on my behalf and then assure me, by Your Spirits gracious instructions, that my sins, which were many, are all forgiven for Jesus sake, that so I may go on my way rejoicing as a sinner saved by Sovereign Grace.

Those of you who were here last Sabbath morning [See Sermon #925, Volume   
16INDIVIDUAL SIN LAID ON JESUSRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] will remember that my text was, All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. And you will also recollect that I tried to describe various characters to whom that verse applies. I hope God gave comfort and blessing to some who listened to the sermon here. But oh, it was a joy to me to hear of one far away in Scotland who had been for years desponding and despairing who was led to find rest and peace through reading the printed sermon! But why should not many more of you be blessed while hearing the Word of God as so many are in reading it? Poor captive Soul, why should you not be set at liberty? Arise and shake yourself from the dust, for in Christs name pardon is preached unto you if you will but repent of your sins and trust Him to save you from them!

II. Now, secondly, we are to think of THE AUDIENCE THAT IS TO BE ADDRESSED UPON THIS SUBJECTthat repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Why is this Gospel to be preached among all nations ? Well, first, because all nations need it! And then, because the Gospel is exactly suited to all nations. And further, because God has a chosen number in all nations who will receive the Word and be saved by it. And also because it shall be a witness against those in all nations who hear it but refuse to heed it.

Some nations were learned, yet when Paul was addressing the Greeks who were proud of their philosophy and were continually seeking after wisdom, he preached repentance and remission of sins in Christs namethe same A B C Doctrine of Jesus Christ and Him crucified that he proclaimed wherever he went! And the greatest scholars of the present day, if they would be wise unto salvation, must stoop to learn the same Gospel alphabet! No, rather they will be elevated as they acquire these elements and rudiments of heavenly knowledge and become scholars in Christs School of Grace!

Other nations were very ignorant. In the Apostles days there were some parts of the earth where the people were rude barbarians without any knowledge of books and letters. Yet the Apostles went to them and preached repentance and remission of sinsand the Gospel was simple enough for them to understandand many of the heathen turned from their idols to serve the living God! And in later days, many of the greatest triumphs of the Truth of God have been won among the savages and untutored tribes of Africa, India and North Americaand the islands of the southern seas. Ignorant and degraded as they were, many of them have become new creatures in Jesus Christ, living here to the praise and glory of God and, in due time, going to join the ranks of the blessed above!

There are nations that worship God after a very imperfect fashion, although they know not Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to be the Savior of sinners. To these, also, we must preach repentance and remission of sins in Christs name, for no man can come unto the Father except by Jesus Christ, His Son! Men cannot know God until they see the brightness of His Glory revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. To theists and polytheists, those who believe in one God and those who worship gods many and lords many, we have but one message, even that which our Lord Himself delivered, Repent you, and believe the Gospel. And already, many of them, by Divine Grace, have repented and received the remission of their sins in Christs name!

There are three very important words at the end of our text beginning at Jerusalem. John Bunyan has a masterly treatise upon this text, entitled The Jerusalem sinner saved; or, good news for the vilest of men: being a help for despairing souls, showing that Jesus Christ would have mercy in the first place offered to the biggest sinners. Those of you who have his works will find the whole treatise well worth reading, but I am going to borrow some of his divisions and speak upon them after my own fashion.

Bunyans first reason why Christ would have mercy proclaimed first to the biggest sinners is because the biggest sinners have most need thereof. A surgeon who is caring for the wounded on a battlefield and who has several soldiers awaiting his attention, will be anxious, first, to attend to the man who is the most seriously hurt and whose life seems fast ebbing away. He will leave for a while the one who has only a slight scratch or cut on his flesh, and devote all his thought and care to the man who is so terribly maimed and lacerated that it is a marvel how he manages to live at all! He will have him put in the ambulance and taken at once to the field hospital, that his life may be saved if it is possible. And oh, if among my hearers there are some great offenderssome who have sinned very terribly, some who have sinned against God and man, against their own bodies and souls, some who may be truly called, Jerusalem sinners, the vilest of menI want to assure them, first, that my Master has sent me to preach especially to them and to tell them that if they repent of their sinsmany and great as they have beenthey shall all be forgiven!

Bunyans second reason why Christ would have mercy preached first to the biggest sinners is because when they, any of them, receive it, it redounds most to the fame of His name. If a doctor cures someones finger that is only slightly injured, he may get the credit of it, yet no one will say much about it. But if there is a person who is suffering from a disease that is believed to be incurable and a wise physician is the means of his restoration to health, how the whole neighborhood will ring with his praises! When someone else is very ill, friends will say, You should send for Dr. So-and-So. You know what he did for that other poor man, perhaps he could do as much for you. And when the Lord Jesus Christ saves some black blasphemer or some leader in vice and iniquity, how fast the news flies throughout the whole region where he lives! Why, even among the lowest of the low, when one of their companions is converted, you know how they talk about it! They cry, Have you heard whats happened to old Jack? No. What is it? Why, you know that he used to go along with us, first in all manner of eviland now he has become a Christian! That is sure to be repeated among all his old connections and so Christ gets fame and honor through His great work of Grace and, therefore, it is that He would have the biggest sinners specially bid to repent and believe the Gospel.

Bunyans third reason is because, by their forgiveness and salvation, others, hearing of it, will be encouraged the more to come to Him for life. When sinners hear that some big black sinner has been forgiven by Christ, they naturally ask, Then why should not we be forgiven? A rebel city is besieged and the king threatens to hang every traitor when he captures it. They do all they can to strengthen their defenses and to beat off the besiegers, resolved never to yield. But when one of their greatest captains is captured and the king, instead of hanging him, sends him back to the city loaded with gifts and bids him tell his fellow rebels that if they will only open the gates, he will forgive them and he will give them a royal charter for their city, and will be the patron of all their industries, what do they do? Why, Sirs, they fling wide the gates! They ring the bells and they beg the king to enter at once and accept their loyal homage! You can easily apply the parable to your own case. I pray that many of you may do so right now.

The time flies so fast that I cannot take Bunyans lessons in detail. His next one is that when the biggest sinners are saved, they weaken Satans kingdom the most. Catch the ringleaders and you can soon break up the band. Often one man can twist quite a number round his fingers and make them do as he pleases. When he is converted, he brings his mates to hear the preacher whose word was blessed to himand thus many are won to Christ and Satans ranks are thinned!

Besides, how it strengthens the Church when great sinners are converted! It was a great day for the Churches of England when John Bunyan was saved. It was a glorious day for the Apostolic Churches when Saul the persecutor became Paul the preacher! And this will be a grand night for the Tabernacle Church if the Lord will turn some great sinner here from the error of his ways and enlist him beneath the banner of the Cross! This is the kind of man who will lead the forlorn to hope in Christ, and plant the victorious banner of the Gospel on heights of sin that seem inaccessible to ordinary Christians! Great sinners, when they are converted, are the men to do great exploits in the name of Jesus!

Further, where great sinners are forgiven, it is a clear proof that the Gospel has power to bless other sinners. When the elephants entered the ark, all the beasts outside could see that the door was wide enough to admit them. As Gods Grace saved the chief of sinners, that Grace can save you, my Friend, however great a sinner you have been! There may have come in here tonight, as they often do, those who are not usually found in places of worship. My Brother or my Sister, for as such I regard you, sinner as you are, I have to tell you that if you will repent of your sin and trust in Jesus as your Savior, you shall go out of this house justified, even as the publican went out of the Temple of old after he had, from the depths of his soul cried, God be merciful to me, a sinner!

Thus have I tried to preach repentance and remission of sins in Christs name to the Jerusalem sinners, the very worst men and women here! But I must not close without also preaching in the same fashion to you who think you are not the worst sinners here. O you respectable sinners, you moral and amiable sinners! You also need a Savior! Though you would stand by yourselves and say, God, we thank You that we are not as other men and as other women are, yet Christs message to you is, You must be born-again. You, too, need to be washed in the precious blood of Jesus! Therefore, in His name, I preach to you repentance and remission of sins, just as I have done to the greatest sinners here. May the ever-blessed Spirit come to you and take away your pride and your self-righteousness, and bring you down where you must comejust as publicans and harlots must cometo the pierced feet of Him who loves sinners, receives sinners and saves sinnersand who will receive you and save you if you will but trust Him! God grant it for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ACTS 2:36-47.**

You know that Peter had been preaching a plain, simple, straightforward sermon upon the death, Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who was once such a coward that he trembled before a little maid, now that he is filled with the Spirit, boldly charges this crowd with being murderers and Deicides because their kind put to death the Lord of Life and Glory! If you turn to the 36th verse, you will see the effect of Peters plain preaching through the power of the Holy Spirit

36, 37. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart [See Sermon

#2102, Volume 35PRICKED IN THEIR HEARTRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] A little later in this same Book, we read of those who listened to Stephens sharp, sword-like sentences, When they heard these things, they were cut to the heartand soon they stoned Stephen to death! To be cut to the heart is not enough! But to be pricked in the heart is to receive a mortal wound! Happy is the man who has had his sin killed through having received a deadly wound from the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God! These people who heard Peter preach were pricked in their heart and, first, they were in doubt as to what they should do, but secondly, they were resolved that whatever they were told to do they would do at once.

37, 38. And said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Nobody but a Baptist minister could have preached that sermon! At least we shall have to wait a long while before we hear any other saying to a whole congregation, Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you. This is, indeed, the full proclamation of the Gospeland we have no more right to leave out the Baptism than we have to leave out the repentance! Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you. Peter was not like those hyper-Calvinists who are afraid to give an exhortation to a sinner because he is spiritually dead! He spoke out boldly to those who had asked, What shall we do? and said to them, Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

39. For 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. [See Sermon #2586, Volume  
44A FAR-REACHING PROMISERead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This is a most blessed verse. The promise is to us and to our descendantsnot merely to our children, but also to our grandchildren. Yes, and to our race as far as it yet may run! And the next clause, and to all that are afar off proves that the promise is made to the far-off ones as well as to our children, with only this limitation, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40. And with many other works did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Not, save yourselves from Hellthat Christ, alone, can do for you, but save yourselves from this generation by coming boldly out from among the ungodly, taking upon you the distinctive mark of the Christian and so separating yourselves from those upon whom the sentence of death shall fall.

41-45. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need. What a notable instance this was of the power of Divine Grace! We would not usually suppose that the Jewish race would be given to any excess of making common propertybut where Grace came in the first flush of its dawn, see to what prodigies of liberality it excited the early Believers! Would that we had more of this generous spirit nowadays!

46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. I believe that wherever two or three disciples of Christ meet together it is competent for them to celebrate the Lords Supper. That ordinance is not, as some think it to be, a Church ordinance, to be confined to the official assembling of all Believersbut wherever two or three are met in Christs name, there He isand where He is, there may the emblems of His broken body and shed blood be partaken of in memory of Him!

47. Praising God, and having favor with all His people. And the lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. [See Sermon #1167, Volume  
20ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCHRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #329 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

CHRISTS FIRST AND LAST SUBJECT   
NO. 329

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.   
Matthew 4:17.**

**And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47.**

IT SEEMS from these two texts that repentance was the first subject upon which the Redeemer dwelt and that it was the last which, with His departing breath, He commended to the earnestness of His disciples. He begins His mission crying, Repent. He ends it by saying to His successors the Apostles, Preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

This seems to me to be a very interesting fact and not simply interesting but instructive. Jesus Christ opens His commission by preaching repentance. What then? Did He not by this act teach us how important repentance wasso important that the very first time He opens His mouth, He begins with, Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand? Did He not feel that repentance was necessary to be preached before He preached faith in Himself because the soul must first repent of sin before it will seek a Savior, or even care to know whether there is a Savior at all?

And did He not also indicate to us that as repentance was the opening lesson of the Divine teaching, so, if we would be His disciples we must begin by sitting on the stool of repentance before we can possibly go upward to the higher forms of faith and of full assurance? Jesus at the first begins with repentancethat repentance may be the Alpha, the first letter of the spiritual alphabet which all Believers must learn. And when He concluded His Divine commission with repentance, what did He say to us but thisthat repentance was still of the very last importance?

He preaches it with His first, He will utter it with His last breath. With this He begins, with this He will conclude. He knew that repentance was, to spiritual life, a sort of Alpha and Omegait was the duty of the beginning, it was the duty of the end. He seemed to say to us, Repentance, which I preached to you three years ago when I first came into the world as a public Teacher, is today still as binding and as necessary for you who heard Me then and who then obeyed My voice, as it was at the very first instant. And it is equally needful that you who have been with Me from the beginning should not imagine that the theme is exhausted and out of dateyou, too, must begin your ministry and

conclude it with the same exhortation, Repent and be converted, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

It seems to me that nothing could set forth Jesus Christs idea of the high value of repentance more fully and effectually than the fact that He begins with it and that He concludes with it. That He should say, Repent, as the keynote of His ministry, preaching this duty before He fully develops all the mystery of godliness and that He should close His life-song as a good composer must, with His first keynote, bidding His disciples still cry, Repentance and remission of sins are preached in Jesus name, I feel, then, that I need no further apology for introducing to your solemn and serious attention the subject of saving repentance. And oh, while we are talking of it, may God the Holy Spirit breathe into all our spirits and may we now repent before Him and now find those blessings which He has promised to the penitent.

With regard to repentance, these four thingsfirst, its origin. Secondly, its essentials. Thirdly, its companions. And fourthly, its excellencies.   
I. RepentanceITS ORIGIN. When we cry, Repent and be converted, there are some foolish men who call us legal. Now we beg to state, at the opening of this first point, that repentance is of Gospel parentage. It was not born near Mount Sinai. It never was brought forth anywhere but upon Mount Zion. Of course repentance is a dutya natural dutybecause when man has sinned, who is there brazen enough to say that it is not mans bounden duty to repent of having done so? It is a duty which even nature itself would teach.   
But Gospel repentance was never yet produced as a matter of duty. It was never brought forth in the soul by demands of Law, nor indeed, can the Law except as the instrument in the hand of Gods Grace, even assist the soul towards saving repentance. It is a remarkable fact that the Law itself makes no provision for repentance. It says, This do and you shall live; break My command and you shall die. There is nothing said about penitence. There is no offer of pardon made to those that repent.

The Law pronounces its deadly curse upon the man that sins but onceand offers no way of escapeno door by which the man may be restored to favor. The barren sides of Sinai have no soil in which to nourish the lovely plant of penitence. Upon Sinai the dew of mercy never fell. Its lightning and its thunder have frightened away the angel of Mercy once and for all and there Justice sits, with sword of flame, upon its majestic throne of rugged rock, never purposing for a moment to put up its sword into the scabbard and to forgive the offender.   
Read attentively the twentieth chapter of Exodus. You have the Commandments there all thundered forth with trumpet voice and there is no pause between where Mercy with her silver voice may step in and say, But if you break this Law, God will have mercy upon you and will show Himself gracious if you repent. No words of repentance, I say, were ever proclaimed by the Lawno promise by it made to penitents. And no assistance is by the Law ever offered to those who desire to be forgiven.   
Repentance is a Gospel grace. Christ preached it, but not Moses. Moses neither can nor will assist a soul to repent. Only Jesus can use the Law as a means of conviction and an argument for repentance. Jesus gives pardon to those who seek it with weeping and with tears. But Moses knows of no such thing. If repentance is ever obtained by the poor sinner it must be found at the foot of the Cross and not where the Ten Commandments lie shivered at Sinais base.   
And as repentance is of Gospel parentage, I make a second remarkit is also of gracious origin. Repentance was never yet produced in any mans heart apart from the Grace of God. As soon may you expect the leopard to regret the blood with which its fangs are moistenedas soon might you expect the lion of the wood to abjure his cruel tyranny over the feeble beasts of the plainas expect the sinner to make any confession or offer any repentance that shall be accepted of God unless Gods Grace shall first renew the heart. Go and loose the bands of everlasting winter in the frozen north with your own feeble breath and then hope to make tears of penitence bedew the cheek of the hardened sinner.   
Go and divide the earth and pierce its heart with an infants finger and then hope that your eloquent appeal, unassisted by Divine Grace, shall be able to penetrate the adamantine heart of man. Man can sin and he can continue in it, but to leave the hateful element is a work for which he needs a Divine power. As the river rushes downward with increasing fury, leaping from crag to crag in ponderous cataracts of power, so is the sinner in his sinonward and downwardonward yet more swiftly, more mightily, more irresistibly, in his hellish course.   
Nothing but Divine Grace can bid that cataract leap upward or make the floods retrace the pathway which they have worn for themselves down the rocks. Nothing, I say, but the power which made the world and dug the foundations of the great deep can ever make the heart of man a fountain of life from which the floods of repentance may gush forth. So then, Soul, if you shall ever repent it must be a repentance not of nature, but of grace.   
Nature can imitate repentance. It can produce remorse. It can generate the feeble resolve. It can even lead to a partial, practical reform. But unaided Nature cannot touch the vitals and create new the soul. Nature may make the eyes weep but it cannot make the heart bleed. Nature can bid you amend your ways but it cannot renew your heart. No, you must look upward, Sinner. You must look upward to Him who is able to save unto the uttermost. You must at His hands receive the meek and tender spirit. From His fingers must come the touch that shall dissolve the rock. And from His eyes must dart the flash of love and light that can scatter the darkness of your impenitence.   
Remember, then, at the outsettrue repentance is of Gospel origin and is not the work of the Law. And on the other hand, it is of gracious origin and is not the work of the creature.   
II. But to pass forward from this first point to our second head, let us notice the ESSENTIALS of true repentance. The old Divines adopted various methods of explaining penitence. Some of them said it was a precious medicine compounded of six things. But in looking over their divisions I have felt that I might with equal success divide repentance into four different ingredients. This precious box of ointment which must be broken over the Saviors head before the sweet perfume of peace can ever be smelt in the soulthis precious ointment is compounded of four most rare, most costly things.   
God gives them to us and then gives us the compound itself mixed by the Masters hand. True repentance consists of illumination, humiliation, detestation and transformation.   
To take them one by one. The first part of true repentance consists of illumination. Man by nature is impenitent because he does not know himself to be guilty. There are many acts which he commits in which he sees no sin. Even in great and egregious faults he often knows that he is not right but he does not perceive the depth, the horrible enormity of the sin which is involved in them. Eye-salve is one of the first medicines which the Lord uses with the soul. Jesus touches the eyes of the understanding and the man becomes as guilty in his own sight as he always was in the sight of God.   
Crimes long forgotten start up from the grave where his forgetfulness had buried them. Sins which he thought were not sins suddenly rise up in their true character. Acts which he thought were perfect now discover themselves to have been so mixed with evil motive that they were far from being acceptable with God. The eye is no more blind and therefore the heart is no more proud for the seeing eye will make a humble heart. If I must paint a picture of penitence in this first stage I should portray a man with his eyes bandaged walking through a path infested with the most venomous vipersvipers which have formed a horrible girdle about his loins and are hanging like bracelets from his wrists.   
The man is so blind that he knows not where he is, nor what it is which he fancies to be a jeweled belt upon his arm. I would, then, in the picture touch his eyes and bid him see his horror and his astonishment when he discovers where he is and what he is. He looks behind him and he sees through what broods of vipers he has walked. He looks before him and he sees how thickly his future path is strewed with these venomous beasts. He looks about him and in his living bosom looking out from his guilty heart he sees the head of a vile serpent which has twisted its coils into his very vitals.   
I would try, if I could, to throw into that face horror, dismay, dread and sorrowa longing to escape, an anxious desire to get rid of all these things which must destroy him unless he should escape from them. And now, my dear Hearers, have you ever been the subject of this Divine illumination? Has God, who said to an unformed world, Let there be lighthas He said, Let there be light in your poor benighted soul? Have you learned that your best deeds have been vile and that as for your sinful acts they are ten thousand times more wicked than ever you believed them to be? I will not believe that you have ever repented unless you have first received Divine illumination. I cannot expect a blind eye to see the filth upon a black hand. Nor can I ever believe that the understanding which has never been enlightened can detect the sin which has stained your daily life.   
Next to illumination comes humiliation. The soul having seen itself, bows before God, strips itself of all its vain boasting and lays itself flat on its face before the Throne of Mercy. It could talk proudly once of merit but now it dares not pronounce the word. Once it could boast itself before God, with, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are. But now it stands in the distance and smites upon its breast, crying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.   
Now the haughty eye, the proud look which God abhors, are cast away and the eye, instead thereof, becomes a channel of tearsits floods are perpetual, it mourns, it weeps and the soul cries out both day and night before God for it is vexed with itselfbecause it has vexed the Holy Spirit and is grieved within itself because it has grieved the Most High.   
Here, if I had to depict penitence, I should borrow the picture of the men of Calais before our conquering king. There they kneel with ropes about their necks, clad in garments of sackcloth and ashes cast about their headsconfessing that they deserve to die. But stretching out their hands they implore mercy. And one who seems the personification of the angel of mercyor rather, of Christ Jesus, the God of mercystands pleading with the king to spare their lives.   
Sinner, you have never repented unless that rope has been about your neck after a spiritual fashion. If you have not felt that Hell is your just desert and that if God banish you forever from Himself to the place where hope and peace can never come, He has only done with you what you have richly earned. If you have not felt that the flames of Hell are the ripe harvest which your sins have sown, you have never repented at all.   
We must acknowledge the justice of the penalty as well as the guilt of the sin or else it is but a mock repentance which we pretend to possess. Down on your face, Sinner, down on your face! Put away your ornaments from you that He may know what to do with you. No more anoint your head and wash your face but fast and bow your head and mourn. You have made Heaven mourn, you have made earth sad, you have dug Hell for yourself. Confess your iniquity with shame and with confusion of face. Bow down before the God of mercy and acknowledge that if He spares you it will be His free mercy that shall do itbut if He destroys you, you shall not have one word to say against the justice of the solemn sentence.  
Such a stripping does the Holy Spirit give when He works this repentance, that men sometimes under it sink so low as even to long for death in order to escape from the burden which soul-humiliation has cast upon them. I do not desire that you should have that terror but I do pray that you may have no boasting left, that you may stop your mouth and feel that if now the judgment hour were set and the Judgment Day were come you must stand speechless, even though God should say, Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell. Without this I say there is no genuine evangelical repentance.

The third ingredient is detestation. The soul must go a step further than mere sorrow. It must come to hate sin, to hate the very shadow of it, to hate the house where once sin and it were companions, to hate the bed of pleasure and all its glittering tapestriesyes, to hate the very garments spotted with the flesh. There is no repentance where a man can talk lightly of sin, much less where he can speak tenderly and lovingly of it. When sin comes to you delicately, like Agag, saying, Surely the bitterness of death is past, if you have true repentance it will rise like Samuel and hew your Agag in pieces before the Lord.   
As long as you harbor one idol in your heart, God will never dwell there. You must break not only the images of wood and of stone but of silver and of gold. Yes, the golden calf itself, which has been your chief idol must be ground into powder and mingled in the bitter water of penitence and you must be made to drink it. There is such a loathing of sin in the soul of the true penitent that he cannot bear its name. If you were to compel him to enter its palaces he would be wretched. A penitent cannot bear himself in the house of the profane. He feels as if the house must fall upon him.   
In the assembly of the wicked he would be like a dove in the midst of ravenous kites. As well may the sheep lick blood with the wolf as well may the dove be comrade at the vultures feast of carrion as a penitent sinner revel in sin. Through infirmity he may slide into it, but through grace he will rise out of it and abhor even his clothes in which he has fallen into the ditch (Job 9:31). The sinner unrepentant, like the sow wallows in the mire. The penitent sinner like the swallow may sometimes dip his wings in the limpid pool of iniquity but he is aloft again, twittering forth with the chattering of the swallow most pitiful words of penitence for he grieves that he should have so debased himself and sinned against his God.  
My Hearer, if you do not so hate your sins as to be ready to give them all upif you are not willing now to hang them on Hamans gallows a hundred and twenty cubits highif you can not shake them off from you as Paul did the viper from his hand and shake it into the fire with detestationthen I say you know not the Grace of God in truth. For if you love sin you love neither God nor yourself, but you choose your own damnation. You are in friendship with death and in league with Hell. God deliver you from this wretched state of heart and bring you to detest your sin.   
There lacks one more ingredient. We have had illumination, humiliation and detestation. There must be another thing, namely, a thorough transformation, for   
*Repentance is to leave   
The sins we loved before,   
And show that we in earnest grieve   
By doing so no more.*   
The penitent man reforms his outward life. The reform is not partial, but in heart. It is universal and complete. Infirmity may mar it, but grace will always be striving against human infirmity and the man will hate and abandon every false way. Tell me not, deceptive Tradesman, that you have repented of your sin while lying placards are still upon your goods. Tell me not, you who were once a drunkard, that you have turned to God while yet the cup is dear to you and you can still wallow in it by excess. Come not to me and say I have repented, you avaricious wretch, while you are yet grinding your almost cent, per cent, out of some helpless tradesman whom you have taken like a spider in your net.   
Come not to me and say you are forgiven, when you still harbor revenge and malice against your brother and speak against your own mothers son. You lie to your own confusion. Your face is as the whores forehead that is brazen, if you dare to say, I have repented, when your arms are up to the elbow in the filth of your iniquity. No, Man, God will not forgive your lusts while you are still reveling in the bed of your uncleanness. And do you imagine He will forgive your drunken feasts while you are still sitting at the gluttons table? Shall He forgive your profanity when your tongue is still quivering with an oath?   
Do you think that God shall forgive your daily transgressions when you repeat them again and again and again, willfully plunging into the mire? He will wash you, Man, but He will not wash you for the sake of permitting you to plunge in again and defile yourself once more.   
Well, do I hear you say, I do feel that such a change as that has taken place in me. I am glad to hear it, my dear Sir. But I must ask you a further question. Divine transformation is not merely in act but in the very soul. The new man not only does not sin as he used to do, but he does not want to sin as he used to do. The flesh-pots of Egypt sometimes send up a sweet smell in his nostrils and when he passes by another mans house where the leek and garlic and onion are steaming in the air, he half wishes to go back again to his Egyptian bondage. But in a moment, by Gods grace, he checks himself, saying, No, no. The heavenly manna is better than this. The water out of the Rock is sweeter than the waters of the Nile and I cannot return to my old slavery under my old tyrant.   
There may be insinuations of Satan but his soul rejects them and agonizes to cast them out. His very heart longs to be free from every sin and if he could be perfect he would. There is not one sin he would spare. If you want to give him pleasure you need not ask him to go to your haunt of debauchery. It would be the greatest pain to him you could imagine. It is not only his customs and manners but his nature that is changed. You have not put new leaves on the tree but there is a new root to it. It is not merely new branches but there is a new trunk altogether and new sap and there will be new fruit as the result of this newness.   
A glorious transformation is worked by a gracious God. His penitence has become so real and so complete that the man is not the man he used to be. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus. If you are renewed by grace and were to meet your old self, I am sure you would be very anxious to get out of his company. No, you say, no, Sir, I cannot accompany you. Why, you used to swear! I cannot now. Well, but, says he, you and I are very near companions. Yes, I know we are and I wish we were not. You are a deal of trouble to me every day. I wish I could be rid of you forever.   
But, says Old Self, you used to drink very well. Yes, I know it. I know you did, indeed, Old Self. You could sing a song as merrily as anyone. You were ringleader in all sorts of vice, but I am no relation of yours now. You are of the old Adam and I of the new Adam. You are of your old father, the devil. But I have anothermy Father, who is in Heaven.   
I tell you, Brethren, there is no man in the world you will hate so much as your old self. And there will be nothing you will so much long to get rid of as that old man who once was dragging you down to Hell. And he will try his hand at it over and over again every day you live and will accomplish it yet unless that Divine Grace which has made you a new man shall keep you a new man even to the end.   
Good Rowland Hill, in his Village Dialogues, gives the Christian whom he describes in the first part of the book, the name of Thomas Newman. Ah, and every man who goes to Heaven must have the name of New-man. We must not expect to enter there unless we are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. I have thus, as best I could, feeling many and very sad distractions in my own mind, endeavored to explain the essentials of true repentanceillumination, humiliation, detestation, transformation. The endings of the words, though they are long words may commend them to your attention and assist you to retain them.   
III. And now, with all brevity, let me notice, in the third place, the COMPANIONS of true repentance.   
Her first companion is Faith. There was a question once asked by the old Puritan DivinesWhich was first in the soul, Faith or Repentance? Some said that a man could not truly repent of sin until he believed in God and had some sense of a Saviors love. Others said a man could not have faith till he had repented of sin. For he must hate sin before he could trust Christ.   
So a good old minister who was present made the following remark: Brethren, said he, I dont think you can ever settle this question. It would be something like asking whether, when an infant is born, the circulation of the blood or the beating of the pulse can be first observed. Said he, It seems to me that faith and repentance are simultaneous. They come at the same moment. There could be no true repentance without faith. There never was yet true faith without sincere repentance.   
We endorse that opinion. I believe they are like the Siamese twins. They are born together and they could not live asunder but must die if you attempt to separate them. Faith always walks side by side with his weeping sister, true Repentance. They are born in the same house at the same hour and they will live in the same heart every day. And on your dying bed, while you will have faith on the one hand to draw the curtain of the next world, you will have repentancewith its tearsas it lets fall the curtain upon the world from which you are departing.   
You will have at the last moment to weep over your own sins and yet you shall see through that tear the place where tears are washed away. Some say there is no faith in Heaven. Perhaps there is not. If there is none then there will be no repentance. But if there is faith there will be repentance, for where faith lives, repentance must live with it. They are so united, so married and allied together that they never can be parted in time or in eternity. Have you, then, faith in Jesus? Does your soul look up and trust yourself in His hands? If so, then have you the repentance that needs not to be repented of.   
There is another sweet thing which always goes with repentance just as Aaron went with Moses, to be spokesman for him. You must know that Moses was slow of speech and so is repentance. Repentance has fine eyes, but stammering lips. In fact it usually happens that repentance speaks through her eyes and cannot speak with her lips at all, except her friend who is a good spokesmanis near. He is called, Mr. Confession.

This man is noted for his openness. He knows something of himself and he tells all that he knows before the Throne of God. Confession keeps back no secrets. Repentance sighs over the sinconfession tells it out. Repentance feels the sin to be heavy withinconfession plucks it forth and indicts it before the Throne of God. Repentance is the soul in travail confession delivers it. My heart is ready to burst and there is a fire in my bones through repentanceconfession gives the heavenly fire a vent and my soul flames upward before God.   
Repentance, alone, has groans which cannot be utteredconfession is the voice which expresses the groans. Now then, have you made confession of your sinnot to man, but to God? If you have, then believe that your repentance comes from Him and it is a godly sorrow that needs not to be repented of. Holiness is evermore the bosom friend of penitence. Fair angel, clad in pure white linenshe loves good company and will never stay in a heart where repentance is a stranger. Repentance must dig the foundations but holiness shall erect the structure and bring forth the top-stone. Repentance is the clearing away of the rubbish of the past temple of sinholiness builds the new temple which the Lord our God shall inherit. Repentance and desires after holiness never can be separated.   
Yet once morewherever repentance is there comes also with it peace. As Jesus walked upon the waters of Galilee and said, Peace, be still, so peace walks over the waters of repentance and brings quiet and calm into the soul. If you would shake the thirst of your soul, repentance must be the cup out of which you shall drink and then sweet peace shall be the blessed effect. Sin is such a troublesome companion that it will always give you the heartache till you have turned it out by repentance and then your heart shall rest and be still.   
Sin is the rough wind that tears through the forest and sways every branch of the trees to and fro. But after penitence has come into the soul the wind is hushed and all is still and the birds sing in the branches of the trees which just now creaked in the storm. Repentance ever yields sweet peace to the man who is the possessor of it.   
And now what are you doing say, my Hearerto put each point personally to youhave you had peace with God? If not, never rest till you have had it and never believe yourself to be saved till you feel yourself to be reconciled. Be not content with the mere profession of the head, but ask that the peace of God which passes all understanding may keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.   
IV. And now I come to my fourth and last point, namely, the EXCELLENCIES of repentance.   
I shall somewhat surprise you, perhaps, if I say that one of the excellencies of repentance lies in its pleasantness. Oh, you say, but it is bitter! No, say I, it is sweet. It may be bitter when it is alone, like the waters of Marah. But there is a tree called the Cross which if you can put into it, it will be sweet and you will love to drink of it. At a school of mutes who were both deaf and dumb the teacher put the following question to her pupilsWhat is the sweetest emotion? As soon as the children comprehended the question, they took their slates and wrote their answers.  
One girl in a moment wrote down Joy. As soon as the teacher saw it, she expected that all would write the same. But another girl, more thoughtful, put her hand to her brow and she wrote Hope. Verily, the girl was not far from the mark. But the next one, when she brought up her slate, had written Gratitude and this child was not wrong. Another one, when she brought up her slate, had written Love and I am sure she was right. But there was one other who had written in large characters and as she brought up her slate the tear was in her eye, showing she had written what she feltRepentance is the sweetest emotion. And I think she was right.   
Verily, in my own case, after that long drought, perhaps longer than Elishas three years in which the heavens poured forth no rain, when I saw but one tear of penitence coming from my hard, hard soulit was such a joy! There have been times when you know you have done wrong but when you could cry over it you have felt happy. As one weeps for his first-born, so have you wept over your sin and in that very weeping you have had your peace and your joy restored. I am a living witness that repentance is exceeding sweet when mixed with Divine hope but repentance without hope is Hell.   
It is Hell to grieve for sin with the pangs of bitter remorse and yet to know that pardon can never come and mercy never be vouchsafed. Repentance, with the Cross before its eyes, is Heaven itselfif not Heaven it is so next door to it, that standing on the tear-wet threshold I may see within the pearly portals and sing the song of the angels who rejoice within. Repentance, then, has this excellencyit is very sweet to the soul which is made to lie beneath its shadow.   
Besides this excellency, it is specially sweet to God as well as to men. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. When St. Augustine lay dying, he had this verse always fixed upon the curtains so that as often as he awoke, he might read itA broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. When you despise yourselves, God honors you. But as long as you honor yourselves, God despises you. A whole heart is a scentless thing. But when it is broken and bruised it is like that precious spice which was burned as holy incense in the ancient tabernacle.   
When the blood of Jesus is sprinkled on them, even the songs of the angels and the vials full of sweet odors that smoke before the Throne of the Most High are not more agreeable to God than the sighs and groans and tears of the brokenhearted soul. So, then, if you would be pleasing with God, come before Him with many and many a tear   
*To humble souls and broken hearts   
God with His grace is ever near.   
Pardon and hope His love imparts,   
When men in deep contrition lie.   
He numbers their tears, He counts their groans, His Son redeems their souls from death.   
His Spirit heals their broken bones,   
They in His praise employ their breath.*   
John Bunyan, in His Siege of Mansoul, when the defeated townsmen were seeking pardon, names Mr. Wet-Eyes as the intercessor with the king. Mr. Wet-Eyesgood Saxon word! I hope we know Mr. Wet-Eyes and have had him many times in our house, for if he cannot intercede with God, yet Mr. Wet-eyes is a great friend with the Lord Jesus Christ and Christ will undertake his case and then we shall prevail. So have I set forth, then, a few of the excellencies of repentance.   
And now, my dear Hearers, have you repented of sin? Oh, impenitent Soul, if you do not weep now, you will have to weep forever! The heart that is not broken now must be broken forever upon the wheel of Divine vengeance. You must now repent or else forever smart for it. Turn or burnit is the Bibles only alternative. If you repent, the gate of mercy stands wide open.   
May the Spirit of God bring you on your knees in self-abasement. Christs Cross stands before you and He who bled upon it bids you look at Him. Oh, Sinner, obey the Divine bidding! But if your heart is hard like that of the stubborn Jews in the days of Moses, take heed lest *The Lord in vengeance dressed,   
Shall lift His head and swear   
You that despised My promised rest,   
Shall have no portion there.*   
At any rate, Sinner, if you will not repent there is one here who will and that is myself. I repent that I could not preach to you with more earnestness this morning and throw my whole soul more thoroughly into my pleading with you. The Lord God, whom I serve, is my constant witness that there is nothing I desire so much as to see your hearts broken on account of sin. And nothing has gladdened my heart so much as the many instances lately vouchsafed of the wonders God is doing in this place.   
There have been men who have stepped into this Hall who had never entered a place of worship for a score of years and here the Lord has met with them. And I believe if I could speak the word, there are hundreds who would stand up now and say, It was here the Lord met with me. I was the chief of sinners. The hammer struck my heart and broke it and now it has been bound up again by the finger of Divine mercy and I tell it unto sinners and tell it to this assembled congregation there have been depths of mercy found that have been deeper than the depths of my iniquity.   
This day there will be a soul delivered. This morning there will be, I do not doubt, despite my weakness, a display of the energy of God and the power of the Spirit. Some drunkard shall be turned from the error of his ways. Some soul, who was trembling on the very jaws of Hell shall look to Him who is the sinners hope and find peace and pardonyes, at this very hour. So be it, O Lord and Yours shall be the glory, world without end. Amen.

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OUR LORDS POSTURE IN ASCENSION   
NO. 2949

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 20, 1875.

**And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Luke 24:50-53.**

[This sermon was originally titled Our Lords Attitude in Ascension.]

OUR Lord Jesus, having spoiled the grave and so proved His power over things that are under the earth, tarried for 40 days among men and so claimed His power over the earth, itself, and then ascended through the air to show that the dominion of the Prince of the power of the air was broken and, finally, entered into the Heaven of Heavens to claim sovereignty there, so that, from the lowest depths up to the extreme heights, He might take possession of His vast domains. I like to think of Him as traversing His dominions from end to end, like a conqueror looking over the provinces which have been subdued by his might. Our Lord did not make a rapid passage through the world. He might have gone, on the Resurrection morning, straight from the grave, as soon as it was opened, into His Glory but He had reasons for tarrying a while, and of those reasons I will briefly speak before I come to the main theme of my discourseour Lords posture in Ascension.

His Ascension occurred 40 days after He had risen from the dead. You know what a significant period 40 days has always been in Scripture and you know that in our Lords own case, He was 40 days in the wilderness tempted of the devil, so that it was seemly for Him to tarry here for 40 days of triumph on the scene of His first great battle and victory. Whatever instruction there may be in these 40 days, I will not attempt to give any fanciful exposition of the meaning of them, but it is quite clear that they were sufficient for certain excellent purposes.

They were sufficient to prove to all mankind that He had truly risen from the dead, not as a phantom, but in real flesh and blood. He made many appearance to His disciples in different ways and in divers places. It was not possible that 500 brethren at once could all be deceived! And if that could be imagined, it is not likely that when, by twos and threes, and even as separate individuals, they had the most intimate communion with Him, they could have been mistaken! It was essential, in the highest degree, that the fact of His Resurrection should be certified beyond all questionand it now remains the best ascertained fact in all history. We may doubt a great many things that are recorded by historians, but we cannot doubt the fact of Christs appearance after His Resurrection because it was not done in a corner, it was not done merely on one occasion, but before so many witnesses and in so many different places! The 40 days was a sufficient period for our Savior to be here to make it clear to all ages that He had really risen from the dead!

Besides that, I have no doubt He timed His sojourn on earth so that He might remove every lingering doubt from the minds of His disciples. Thomas had to be talked to and to be told to put his finger into the print of the nails and to thrust his hand into his Lords side. And there were others beside Thomas who had many doubts. In fact, these was not one of the disciples without some doubt or other, so their Master had to act and speak in such a way that every one of them would be thoroughly assured as to His identity and as to the nature of His risen body. Thus He said to them, 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.

Besides that, the instructions which Christ had previously given to His disciples needed a few finishing touches. Before His death, He had said to them, I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. But after He had risen from the dead, they could bear much more and there is no doubt that He made disclosures to them, then, which let further light into their souls. We read more than once of how He opened their understandings to receive the Scriptures and opened the Scriptures so that their understandings might grasp them!

But, chief of all, our Lord tarried here for 40 days that He might issue His commissions to His disciples. He said to one of them, Feed My sheep and, Feed My lambs. And He said to all of them, Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He would not take His final departure until His last orders were issuedtill He had, as it were, marshaled His battalions, set them in their ranks, given them His commands and bid them march forward to battle and to victory. There was an Infinite Wisdom in the delay between the Resurrection and the Ascension and the more we think of it, the more we shall see that it was so. Thus much concerning the time of our Lords sojourn here after He rose from the dead.

Further, the spot from which the Ascension took place is very instructive. Luke tells us, He led them out as far as to Bethany. But, in the Acts of the Apostles, he informs us that this memorable scene took place upon the mountain called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath days journey. The two statements are not at all inconsistent with one another. I suppose that our Lord was upon that part of the Mount of Olives from which He could look down upon Bethany. To my mind, it is a very beautiful remark which is made by Van Oosterzee upon this incident. He says that when we stand in the place of our Lords Ascension, we have three thingsthe Heaven above us opened, for Christ passed through the golden gates. We have a happy home below, close at our feet, for there was Bethany, where Mary and Martha and Lazarus had their happy abode and none are so happy as those who are joined to the risen Christ! And then we have here a pathway, often trod by Christs blessed feet, and along that pathway the disciples were to go back to Jerusalemthe very Jerusalem out of which He had led them for His Ascension. So that His Ascension from this position gives us three beautiful thingsan opened Heaven, a happy home and a pathway consecrated and smoothed by His blessed feet.

The most significant circumstance, perhaps, about the place of His Ascension was that He went back to Heaven from the place where He had often communed with His disciples. He had opened up many mysteries to them there. It was there that they had sat and looked over at Jerusalem and He had spoken to them about the ultimate destruction of the guilty city. It was a place which was very dear to them and which must have brought many memories to our Saviors mind. There, just under the brow of the hill, were the olive trees of Gethsemane, and His eyes may have looked upon the spot where He wrestled for our sakes with all the powers of death and Hell. It is sweet to think that He ascended to His Glory from the place of His agony and bloody sweat. And, my Brothers and Sisters, we shall do the same in our measure. From the bed whereon we die we shall ascend into Glory and there we shall be transfigured and made like unto our Lord! And from the grave of deathour Gethsemaneour bodies shall leap at the coming of the Lord and the sounding of the great trumpet into all the resurrection beauty and life! Yes, where we fight, we shall conquer! Where we suffer, there we shall reign! I like to think of the last spot of earth that Jesus touched being a mountainfor mountains have often been the places where the grandest transactions of men with God have been performedand to find Him going as near Heaven as He could upon His feet because He would not work a miracle as long as anything could be done by ordinary means. And then gently, as it were, pushing the earth downwards and Himself ascending into the Glory where He now sits at the right hand of God, even the Father!

Think over the time and the place of our Lords Ascension and you will have some subjects worthy of your deepest meditation.   
Then think of the scene itself. There are Christs disciples gathered around Him certainly the Apostles and, perhaps some more of His followers. They have come out to Bethany and Olivet from Jerusalem. I cannot tell whether they walked through the streets at mid-day, but I think it is very likely and if so, many must have stared wonderingly at the Nazarene, whom they had seen nailed to the Cross on Calvary, now alive again and passing through their streets. Whether it was so or not, I cannot tell. They crossed the Kedron, that gruesome brook in which the defilements of the Temple were taken away, and then they passed by Gethsemane, by the winding path till they came to the brow of Olivet where Jesus could look down, on the one side, on Jerusalem and, on the other side, on Bethany. And He began to talk with His discipleswhat if I say that He began to sing His dying song? No, I must not say that, for He did not again die, but He sang His parting hymn and gave His farewell message.   
And then He began to rise. How astonished His disciples must have been! How they must have shrunk back as the majesty flamed forth from Him! He began to rise and up He wentslowly, majestically rising and the disciples looking on till He must have grown smaller and smaller to their astonished vision! And when He was about to vanish from their sight, they saw a cloud float between Himself and them and He was gonegone to His Throne! I like to think of our Lords Ascension in this simple but sublime manner. I might have been terrified if I had been Elisha walking with Elijah when the horses of fire and the chariots of fire came to take him away, but there was nothing terrible about this Ascension of Christ. He was not a Prophet of fireHe was gentle, meek, lowly and there was nothing to inspire terror in the way He ascended to Heaven. It is, to my mind, very beautiful to think of there being no medium employed in connection with His Ascensionno angels wings to bear Him upwardno visible arm of Omnipotence to lift Him gently from the earthno eagle of Jupiter to steal away this choice and chosen One. No, but He rises by His own power and majesty! He needs no help.   
Glad would the angels have been to came once more to earth as they had come at His birth, as they had come to the wilderness, as they had come to His tombgladly would they have ministered to Him! But He needed not their ministry, at least, in the beginning of His journey. He proved the innate power of His Deity by which He could depart out of the world just when He willed, breaking the law of gravity and suspending the laws usually governing matter. Well could He do this, for He made those laws and could alter or control them as He pleased. A cloud received Him out of their sight, for I suppose they had then seen all that they ought to see and, perhaps, behind that cloud there were scenes of Glory which it was not possible for human eyes to gaze uponand words which it was not lawful for human beings to hear. I do not know about that. I like the thought of our hymn writer concerning the angels, after the cloud had hidden Him from mortal view   
*They brought His chariot from above,   
To bear Him to His Throne   
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried, The glorious work is done!*

There does seem to be some guide to us in that matchless 24

th Psalm Lift up your heads, O you gates and be lifted up, you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. It does read as if the warders at the top of the gate enquired, Who is this King of Glory? and that the attending angels replied, The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O you gates and be lifted up, you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Of these things we speak with bated breath, for we know not all that happened, then, but we do know that a cloud received Him out of their sight.

The point upon which I want especially to dwell is thiswhat was the posture in which Christ was last seen by His disciples? I will read the words. He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven, so that the last posture in which Christ was seen was thisHis hands were uplifted in the act of blessing His disciples! I am going to keep to that one thingJesus Christs hands uplifted in blessing as He took His departure from this world. There is sometimes a good deal in the posture which one assumes. The actor, the orator and the preacher all know that there should be appropriate action in whatever we do. When Raphael represents Paul as standing with uplifted hands at Athens, preaching, he did it with good purpose. Perhaps the artists skill has not always been observed, for what was Paul saying when he lifted up his handsGod that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with mens handsand up went his hands at once! And I can very well understand Paul lifting up his hands before Agrippa when he said, I would to God that not only you, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bondsand the manacles rattled appropriately on his wrists!

We are not told much about the action with which our Lord Jesus Christ accompanied His speech. There is one thing recorded of Him in which it would be a great blessing if all ministers would imitate Him He opened His mouth and taught them, saying. We do not always know how He stood, but, on the occasion of His Ascension we know exactly what His posture wasHe lifted up His hands, and blessed them.

I. Observe, first, that HIS HANDS WERE UPLIFTED TO BLESS. This blessing was no unusual thing, for His hands were blessed hands and nothing but blessing had ever come from them! What blessings thousands had received from those dear hands of His! Those hands had multiplied the loaves and fishes and fed the hungry thousands. Those hands had touched blind eyes and opened them. Those hands had been laid upon the leper and he was made whole. Those hands had touched the bier whereon the dead young man lay and he had been made to live again! Those blessed hands! Jesus continually went about doing good and His hands were always strewing blessings around Himfull as both of them were with rich treasure out of the storehouse of His heart of love. So, as He blessed His disciples as He was leaving them, He was only continuing to do what He had done ever since they had known Him! The richest blessing that you ever get from Christ is no new thingit is just a continuation of His old habits and practices and if He were, at this moment, to lift His hands and give us some special blessingas I pray that He mayit would only be another link in a long chain of which every link is more precious than the most valuable diamond in the world! He lifted His hands to bless His disciples because He had always been blessing them! And He will continue to bless us, Brothers and Sisters, because He has blessed us in the past and He changes not!   
Christ blessed His disciples this time, however, in a different way, for He blessed them with a new authority. You know that the high priest came out after the Day of Atonement was over and all the sacrifices had been offered, and took off the white robes which he had worn in the early part of the day as a common priest. Those robes must have been all stained with blood, for the whole day he was occupied with the shedding and the sprinkling of the blood. And then the high priest put on his robe of glory and beauty, the garment of blue, and scarlet, and fine linen with its bells of sweetest sound, and its pomegranates and a glittering breastplate on his breast, and a miter on his head. And then he came out and gave to the people the blessing which could only be given when the Atonement was completed. And so, today, Jesus Christ blesses His people, not as the priest who is offering sacrifice, but as the One who has offered it! It is all finished and now, with authority, not as a pleader, but as One who has power to give, He blesses His people. He had invoked blessings upon them beforenow He pronounces blessings upon them! He had looked up to Heaven for the blessing, but now, as it were, He looks down from Heaven and He, Himself, bestows the blessing, for He has it now in His own hands   
*All His work and warfare done*   
He is now going up to His Heaven and He proves His right to reign by beginning now the reign of benediction among the sons of men! If I may so say, He had before blessed His disciples as the preacher pronounces the benediction at the close of the service, but He blessed them now as He never had blessed them beforeand in that sense it was the beginning of that golden discourse from yonder consecrated pulpit at the right hand of God which He still continues to preach to us from this text, Because I live, you shall live also.  
Our Lord Jesus Christs blessing, on that occasion, was, no doubt, a very full one. We are not told what He said. I am quite content not to know. I like to think that, possibly, He did not utter any words at all, but that He looked a blessing and, above all, bestowed a blessing with those blessed hands of Hisnot going up with His hands closed, as though they were full of something for Himself alone, but spread out, as if He would empty out of His hands the countless blessings which He had gasped for our sakes! Look, My children, He says, look! I am keeping nothing for Myself. All I have is for you. Hear, My disciples, hear! Whatever the Father has made known unto Me, I have made known unto you. Look, My children! Look, My Brethren! Behold, I have given you all that I haveMy Manhood and My Godhead, My life, My death, My Resurrection and My Glory. And so, with those blessed hands uplifted, He seems to bestow the fullest conceivable blessing, for He gives us all that God can give! He gives us all that He has, to be ours forever and ever! Can you not picture Him doing this? He is before my minds eye now. My imagination seems to help my faith and I bless His dear name that the last time His disciples saw Him, they saw Him with His hands emptied out upon them in blessing!   
Note, also, that this blessing was for His disciples. May I not lay the emphasis there? He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. Yes, there are common blessings in which all men have a share, but there are special blessings for His chosen ones! He is universally benevolent, but He is especially generous to His own elect! He loved His Church and gave Himself for it. He has redeemed His people by His blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation. There was a specialty about Christs benediction even as there was about His intercession. He said to His Father concerning His disciples, I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me and now that He had risen from the dead, He blessed them. May I hope that I am among the them, for on those disciples the blessing came that it might come on the whole Church of Christ of which they were the representatives? Has that blessing come on you, Beloved? Has God 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? Have we had the blessing of forgiveness, the blessing of justification, the blessing of adoption? Have we, today, the blessing of fellowship, the blessing of power to conquer sin? All these things the Lord gives to His own who know Himto His sheep that hear His voice and that follow Himand to whom He is, indeed, the Good Shepherd!   
Then let me whisper in your earif He has blessed you, you shall be blessed, for there is no power in Heaven, or earth, or Hell that can reverse the blessing which He gives! If Jesus says it, you are indeed blessed! And He will say it again in the last tremendous day, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Notwithstanding all your trials and your troubles, your weaknesses and your infirmities, you are blessed blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earthand you shall be blessed forever and ever, for He who has gone up on high, has left you the legacy of His blessing which shall never be taken away from you.   
I look upon this blessing of the disciples by their ascending Lord as a fitting finish to the Saviors lifeas if the Savior would say to them, There, that is a summary of the whole of My lifeI have lived to bless you. That is the sum total of My teaching, that is the grand end of My ministry, that is the sure result of My deaththat I might bless you. That Resurrection blessing is the culmination of our Saviors lifethat is the last stone put upon the pyramid of His mighty work! That blessing is the last and highest and best thing of all! Let us glory and rejoice in it. Who shall add anything to what Christ has finished? Luke closes his Gospel most appropriately with an, Amen, and Amen it is. Verily, it shall be so. There are no curses to follow the Divine blessing. There shall be no terrors of wrath to follow that benediction of love. He has said it and it stands fast! Though Heaven and earth pass away, blessed shall His people be!   
That is my first point, the posture of our ascending Lord. His hands were uplifted to bless.

II. Now, secondly, THOSE HANDS WERE PIERCED HANDS.   
Look! He is rising from the Mount of Olives. He has not gone high enough yet for us to have quite lost sight of Himmy imagination is trying to picture the scene and I look, and say, Yes, I know Him! I can still see the nail prints. As long as He is in sight, holding up His hands, you can see the distinguishing marks of the Lord Jesusthe emblems and tokens of the Crucified. You cannot mistake Him! Those are the hands that were nailed to the cruel wood of the Cross.   
Those pierced hands, as we look up at them, are useful and comforting because, first, they let us know that they are really Christs hands. Tis He that blesses us! By faith we are receiving blessing from Jesus Christnot from someone else. But those hands do far more than that for us. They show us the price of the blessing which He has given to us. He is blessing us, but oh, how much those blessings cost Him! Unnumbered mercies flow down to us   
*Joys, like His griefs, immense, unknown* but He would not have us forget the griefs with which He bought our joys   
*Theres never a gift His hand bestows   
But cost His heart a groan.*   
You are blessed, Brothers and Sisters, by the Lord Jesus Christ, but the blessing is given to you by Christs pierced hands. Had He never suffered, you could never have been saved. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. The disciples saw not merely that it was a blessing from their Lord, and a blessing that cost Him the nail prints, but that it was a blessing which came by the way of His pierced hands. We get everything good through Christ and especially through His atoning Sacrifice. We cannot have His righteousness apart from His suffering. We cannot get power to conquer sin and Satan apart from the hands that were pierced   
*When wounded sore the stricken soul   
Lies bleeding and unbound,   
One only hand, a pierced hand,   
Can salve the sinners wound.*   
You may try all the royal hands in the world, but they cannot cure the true Kings evilthe terrible evil of sintill the pierced hand of Jesus is laid upon the poor sufferer. And then straightway the fever of despair ceases and the desperate love of sin is sucked out. The wounds of Jesus alone can cure the wounds of our sick humanity! What a blessing it is to know that the way to Gods heart is through the wounds of Christ! You cannot get anything from God except through those wounds. This is that ladder which Jacob saw in his vision. This is that gate of Paradise through which the righteous must enter. This is the refuge of those poor souls that are hunted by the roaring lion of Hellthey must speed away like frightened fawns to Jesus wounds and find protection there! You know how our hymn puts it   
*Him and then the sinner see,   
Look through Jesus wounds on me.*   
It is a blessing even to look at those pierced handsnot with these mortal eyes, for they might have gazed upon them and yet we might not have believed on Him. But it is a great blessing to look, with the eye of faith, at the pierced hands of Jesusto look at Him whom we have pierced and so to be caused to mourn over the sin that pierced Him. It is a great blessing to have a broken heart mourning because of sin and to look at Jesus Christ and to know that He has carried my sins right away with those dear pierced hands of Histhat is a still greater blessing! I pray the Lord to enable some of you to look at the pierced hands of Jesus. There is life in a look at Him! Turn now your eyes, though dimmed with tears, almost blinded with unbelief, with a cataract of despair forming over it and look as best you can to Him  
*Who bore, that you might never bear,   
His Fathers righteous ire.*   
In those pierced hands alone you can find salvation, for all power in Heaven and in earth is given to those hands, and therefore is it that we preach the Gospel to you! Jesus is able, with a touch, to bestow salvation upon the very chief of sinners! So the blessing comes by the hands that were pierced.   
I think that this action of Christ is an epitome of the Gospel, the substance of the whole matterpierced hands distributing benedictions! There is Jesus, going up to Heaven from the earth, out of which He has risen from the grave where He was buried after He had died as the Substitute for sinners. And as He goes up, He is blessing men with His pierced hands. To a sinner I would say, This is the way the blessing must comefrom the pierced hands of the Christ who rose from the dead. Look up to Him and live.   
III. I must not linger longer, though the theme is enticing, but must close with a third reflection. I have reminded you that the hands of Christ were uplifted to bless and that those hands were pierced hands. Now, thirdly, I have to show you that THOSE HANDS SWAY THE SCEPTER. We look back to Calvary and Olivet and remember that the hands that blessed us were the hands that bled for us. Now look forward and see that the hands that blessed us are the hands that rule the world!   
At this very moment, the scepter of Providence is held in the hand that was piercedthe hand of the Man of Love, the Crucified, for, all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. There is not an angel in Heaven who does not delight to do His biddingand the time shall come when at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.   
Further, those hands which blessed us, are the hands that rule the Church of God. At this moment Jesus walks among the golden candlesticks, bearing blessings to the divers branches of His Church, everywhere ruling in all things, for He is the Head over all things to the Church.  
And those are the hands which we shall see on the morning of the Resurrection when the trumpet shall sound and that Great White Throne which, like a mirror, shall reflect every mans inmost self and shall fill the center of the wondrous assembly of all men of all nations and ages! The hand of the Judge shall be the hand of our Redeemer! The spouse in the Song of Songs says of the Bridegroom, His hands are like gold rings set with beryl. Whatever that charming imagery may mean, I am sure it cannot be good enough to express the beauty of Christs hands to us. The brightest gem that monarch ever wore could not be compared, for a single second, to the beauty of those wounds of His   
*Now resplendent shine His nail prints,   
Every eye shall see His wounds.   
They who pierced Him   
Shall at His appearance wail*   
but we shall not, for we shall say, Those are the very hands that blessed us! The last time they were seen of mortal men, they were extended in blessing His disciples, so they cannot be the hands to smite us, for He does not first bless and then curse. It shall never be said of Him, Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing to His people. No, He says, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands. And in those nail prints Jesus reads the names of all His people. For love of them He bore all that He endured for their sakes. Jacobs hands, no doubt, bore the marks of his 14 years of toil for Rachel. And if he ever showed them to her, they must have appeared fair in her sight because they were tokens of his long-tried love. But, oh, what blessed tokens of love will Christs nail prints be to us and what blessed assurances will they be to us that, having loved us so much, He will never curse usthat having bought us with His blood, He cannot cast us away! Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? You cannot separate the nail prints from the hands, nor can you separate those who were redeemed by the blood of Jesus from the heart of Him who redeemed them! In His flesh He bears the tokens of His eternal union with us and that nail print is like the marriage ringthe token that He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and one with us forever. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Paul truly wrote, This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.   
What is to come out of all this? Have you seen Christ in any measure tonight? Has the Holy Spirit made use of my tongue, as a truth, to paint a picture? Have you, by faith, seen Christ rising with uplifted hands, the pierced hands, the hands that are to sway the scepter of universal Sovereignty? Then do just what His disciples did. First, they worshipped Him. Let us render to Jesus now, in our minds, a distinct act of worship. Let not the day close till, in addition to all those devotions which we are accustomed to render to Him, we adore Him! A cloud is between us and Him, but the comfort is that it is only a cloud and the sun soon breaks through a cloud. It is a cloud that is raining blessings on us, for it was expedient for us that Christ should go away and the descent of the Spirit is one of the results of His Ascension to Heaven! He can shine through that cloud and shine through it gloriously, too! Let us worship Him now. Blessed be Your name, O Eternal God, Immanuel, God With Us! Adore Him, Brothers and Sisters, in the silence of your soul.   
Then, next, like the disciples, let us be filled with joy, for we are told that they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Yes, you must go back to your Jerusalem. You must go home. You must go among ungodly men and women to serve your Lord. But go, as the disciples did, with great joygo with this jubilant note on your lips *Our Lord is risen from the dead!   
Our Jesus is gone up on high!   
The powers of Hell are captive led   
Dragged to the portals of the sky.*   
I have known that one thought of our Lords exaltation lifts me up from the borders of despair. In a dread hour, long since past, when reason almost reeled after great calamities had overtaken me, I recovered my balance and my peace of mind in a single moment by the recollection of that one text, Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. I felt, after the tragedy in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, like the soldier who was mortally wounded and lying in a ditch, but I seemed to hear the shout, God has highly exalted HIM, so I did not care what became of me as long as my Lord was exalted. It is said that one of the great Napoleons soldiers lay wounded and bleeding to death, but he saw the Emperor ride by and his eyes flashed fire again! And he said, Never mind what becomes of me, for the Emperor is safe. That was how I felt, in a far higher sense, concerning my exalted Lord. And I said to myself, So long as He lives and reigns, all is well! Men may rave at me as they will, but what does it matter so long as He is exalted? I want you, dear Friends, to feel like that concerning your ascended Lord. Go home and worship Him and be filled with great joy!

Then there was another thing that the disciples did. They were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. Let your joy have adequate expression. Jesus is risen, so begin to praise Him and, having once begun, keep on praising Him and never leave off as long as there is cause for praising Himand that will be forever and ever! Jesus has gone up to Heaven and cleared an open way for us right up to the Throne of God! So send your praises up to Him! Let your heart mount from the earth right up to the heart of God! I can urge you to do this, but only the Holy Spirit can enable you to do itand I pray that He may do this for all the Lords people now.   
If outsiders are asking, What have we to do with this Jesus who has gone up into Heaven? let me remind you of another purpose of His exaltation. Peter said to the high priest, Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel that is, to the very chief of sinnersto give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And it is through faith in Him that this forgiveness may be given to you. If you trust in Him who has risen from the dead and gone into His Glory, you shall be saved, for, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. That is what He is doing now, so trust Him with your case, trust Him now, for His dear names sake. Amen.

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